Femme Fatales™

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SCREAM KING
KEVIN WILLIAMSON

NANCY ALLEN

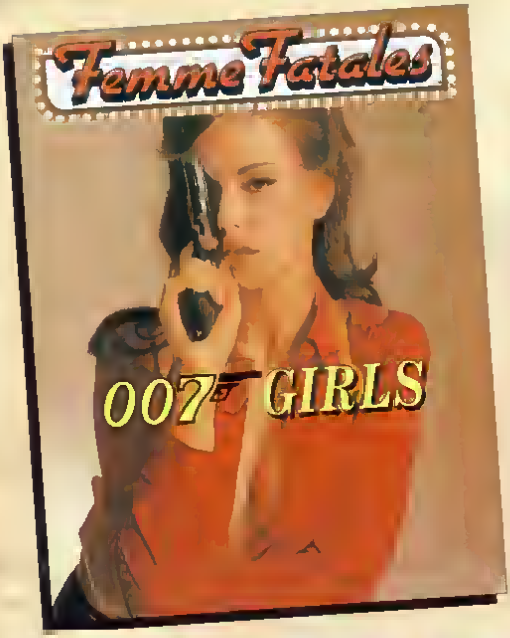
JULIE DELPY

SUPERMODEL
IRENA PANTEVA

Elvira

Cassandra Peterson,
the patron saint of
Halloween Glamour

Volume 6 Number 7



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You won't want to miss our next issue devoted to Hong Kong action star Michelle Yeoh, star of TOMORROW NEVER DIES, the new James Bond adventure. London correspondent Alan Jones interviewed Yeoh on the set of the new Bond epic during filming at Pinewood Studios. And in a nostalgic companion piece, Bond expert Mark A. Altman picks "The 50 Sexiest Figures of James Bond," a lushly illustrated survey of the best the series had to offer. Also, in the same issue, the next millennium's Sci-Fi Siren, introducing Tina Cote, whose leading men include Christopher Lambert and Rutger Hauer. Eschewing traditional roles, Cote has been cast as androids, assassins and femmes fatale in the likes of HEATSEEKER, MEAN GUNS and OMEGA DOOM, now featured in a scorchy photo spread shot exclusively for Femme Fatales.

Plus, the debut of a new live action embodiment of temptress Vampirella, and a profile of comic illustrator Amanda Conner, and a look at Edgar Rice Burroughs' 40s serial JUNGLE GIRL. Subscribe today and pick up those back issues you may have missed!

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Femme Fatales

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2 02 AM Okay, Jenny Huss is munching Asian rice candy and gulping down a can of some diet concoction (last week we purchased a 6-pack of the stuff from a gas station hidden on the New Jersey Turnpike) Me I've got a sake in the microwave Wrapping this issue we're retiring from the boa-constrictive deadline (until tomorrow) by watching anything in syndication right now we're riveted by the sorriest spectacle in memory...

During the past year Jenny challanged me to match the most humiliating screw-up on television she considers the worst blunder to be a drunken Lon Chaney as the Frankenstein monster, inebriated into thinking his participation in a live (1952) adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic was only a dress rehearsal (as a result the actor gingerly declined to smash props in scripted scenes of rage) Well close to 50 years after Chaney's unprecedented embarrassment I've got his match we're watching critic Gene Siskel—whom I suspect is sober—kissing-up to disputably one of the shadiest politicians in U S history "Gee, President Clinton," gushes Siskel, "the president portrayed in INDEPENDENCE DAY was kinda wimpy—not powerful like yourself. Didn't that bother you?" You almost expect Siskel, who's about as impartial as *The New Republic* to ask the prez to strike a Charles Atlas pose so he could ecstatically swing from his biceps Lon Chaney, R I P —the sycophant Siskel whom we're awarding the Joe Besser trophy as "Clinton's stooge" has dethroned you as prime time's Sultan of Shame Hey I'm a registered Democrat but the jingoism stops here

British readers keep an eye peeled for a certain broadcast of *Movewatch* that's likely to debut next month ("prior to Christmas") the management of Channel 4's Chapter One Productions asked *FF* to select actresses and directors who best represent the cinema's independents The resultant interviews were taped September 8th & 9th some of the behind-the-scenes vignettes are side-splitting

We'll see you next month...

Bill George

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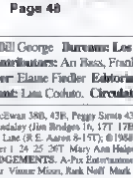

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TURTLE FEMME VENUS DEMILO

AND THIS BOMBS*HELL* IS A RECURRENT "X-FILES" PLAYER.

BY FRANK GARCIA

Spring, '97: Concluding another day of carnage, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles high-five their 13-year homage to male bonding. **Fall, '97:** There's a shakeup in the turtle paternity. Our four shell-shielded, manly men are handed down a decree: fraternize with a brand new kinsperson. *Her* name is Venus De Milo. That's right, fellas: the boy's club is dismantled.

De Milo's birth was the result of a union which allied the Kids-TV division of Fox and Saban with midwives Shavick Entertainment and Turtles co-creator Kevin Eastman. Their mutual goal was to tailor a NINJA TURTLES television series for Saturday mornings. Eastman notes that the introduction of a fifth Turtle—a female—wasn't exclusively prompted via a suggestion by executive producer Lance Robbins. Nor was Venus a PC concession.

"From the fan mail," recounts Eastman, "one of the most asked about questions was, 'Why don't you have a *girl* Turtle?' In the past, fans always wanted other Turtles: 'You should have another Turtle named Rembrandt!' or 'You should have another Turtle called Picasso!' and so on. The idea of having a female Turtle has been kicked around for some time.

"Saban said, 'We want to give the show an overhaul and bring it into the 90s and beyond.'"

Step #1: *Render Ms. De Milo into a tangible character, infuse her with a personality.* "While some drawing ideas were drafted," recalls Eastman, "Lance and I, and Dan Clark, who's one of the key writers, kicked around some origin possibilities," says Eastman. "And we came up with the easiest one: having a fifth Turtle, in the original jar, dropped down with the canister of ooze into the sewer. But Venus fell further down the sewer and floated downstream, and was picked up by a Chinese monk. Turtles in many Oriental cultures are a sign of long life and good luck. So the monk, having seen this turtle as a good luck charm, took it back with him to China. As she began to grow, he raised her as his own."

Raised by Chung I, De Milo turns student of the mystic arts. By harnessing the power of her mind and heart, she can manipulate the elemental world, e.g., lobbing bolts of energy via mental concentration. She can float, dream walk and conjure illusions. Her weapon of choice is Kai Mai or Armored Bees: they're pellets, the size of ping-pong balls, which—with a little improvisation—can be converted into smoke bombs or gooey glue balls.

Step #2: *Apply a name to the creation.* Eastman recalls that everyone threw suggestions into a hat. "Coming up with a list of five names, we'd pick the one that we thought would be the most appropriate and hip. We considered Mona Lisa and Madonna—we were trying to come up with things from the Renaissance period.

"It would have been implausible for Venus—like our familiar Turtle quartet—to be christened by a rat in New York. She was a resident of China, so she had an Oriental name: Mei Pish Chi. When she comes to New York and meets Michelangelo in one of the first episodes, he says, 'Wow! She's beautiful! She's like Venus De Milo!' The name sort of stuck and they'd nick-

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Nicole Parker declines to come out of her shell as Venus De Milo (God, we hate *shell* jokes). "Venus is very centered," says Parker. "She uses her brain."

ATTRACTIONS FATALE

BY LAURA SCHIFF

●Tracy Scoggins (*FF* 2 3) has graduated from LOIS AND CLARK alumnas to star of BABYLON 5 Making the transition to a fifth season, the sci fi series will be transplanted to the TNT network by mid-January Cast as Captain Elizabeth Lochley Ms Scoggins is the likely substitute for the matriarchal presence vacated by Claudia Christian The buzz on the Internet is whether Christian s absence is a result of her resignation or dismissal check-out *FF* 6 6 for her story (vs the producer s) TNT's publicity department has diplomatically omitted Christian from updated press releases

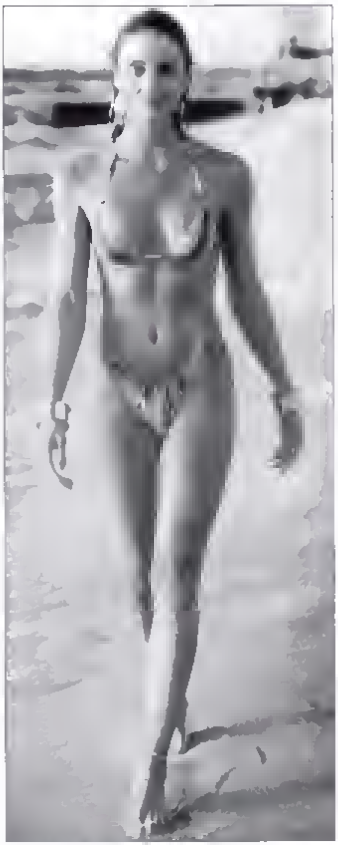
●BABYLON 5 addicts should tap into the Patricia Tallman web site **http://www.draelcom/tallman** Tallman who portrays Lyta Alexander on the series offers fans a profusion of glamorous photos in addition to a bio, updated info related to her convention appearances and links to other BABYLON 5 sites (including Claudia Christian s web page—and yes Christian addresses her casting controversy with some blistering commentary) Tallman s off line address *The Patricia Tallman Fan Club, c/o Broads on the Boards Productions 12826 Victory Blvd , Ste 334, North Hollywood CA-91606* One of our favorite sci fi sirens, Tallman donates a portion of membership dues—and her personal income—to Penny Lane a shelter for victims of child abuse

● Richmond journalist Richard Foster has written The Real Bettie Page The Truth About the Queen of Pin ups (Carol Publishing Group/Birch Lane Press) an unauthorized bio that demythologizes the Tennessee tease s legend "I learned through extensive research and digging through old court records that Bettie Page was arrested for attempted murder " says Foster "and she did some time in a mental hospital " The book, scheduled for a fall 97 debut, includes Page s 1972 mug shot, the last photo of the pin-up icon ever made public Adds the author, "I m a fan of Bettie Page but I m also a journalist and I had a job to do. My job was to tell the story of Bettie Page s life as honestly and accurately as possible, without bias This wasn't an easy revelation for me to make."

Christine Vachon, producer of HBO's upcoming Bettie Page documentary is reportedly negotiating a movie adaptation of Foster s book For the full story check-out our Bettie Page double issue which will debut during the Holidays

● Julie Strain wrapped RETURN TO SAVAGE BEACH another Andy Sidaris saga that merges bikinis n ballistics "I play the head of the Lethal Ladies department at the FBI " says Strain who co-stars with Julie K Smith and Carrie Westcott. "I run the show and save the world It's sort of like James Bond meets CHARLIE S ANGELS Babes boobs and dynamite "

● Just got back from Death Valley, where I spent a weekend at a movie location—an honest-to-goodness, certifiably haunted hotel I was the guest of actress/*FF* cover woman (6 4) Tané McClure who was working both sides of the camera for TRANCE a "sensuous thriller about the dark side of magicians " McClure making her debut as producer co-wrote the screenplay with director Gary Orona, "It's nice being the producer " smiles McClure "because if something doesn't seem like it's going right, or I think I have a better idea I can say Hey! What about *that* camera angle? or 'Why don't we just shoot this at *night*? Why don t we shoot the levitation sequences *outdoors*, with the sky?' I mean these are things that you can do if you re producing As an actress, I could say it—but it's going to go about two inches " Cast as a mobster s wife, McClure is drawn to a lusty magician who will risk everything to wield the ancient art of trance and levitation Balance of the cast includes Martin Kove (FUTURE SHOCK) Bruce Abbott (RE-ANIMATOR) Robert Z'Dar (SOULTAKER) and Lauren Hays (THE GREAT BIKINI OFF ROAD ADVENTURE)



Tracy Scoggins, formerly Superman s second banana, has been cast as curvy Captain Lochley aboard BABYLON 5 she replaces Claudia Christian (r, with Bruce Boxleitner)

● Universal Studios have launched the ON-LINE HORROR CHANNEL **(http://www.universalstudios.com/horror)** The site—replete with video clips live chats with Forrest J Ackerman, trivia, Home Chopping Page, et al—is entirely dedicated to the studio s movie legends (Frankenstein s monster, Dracula The Wolfman The Mummy) I particularly liked the bio on Evelyn Ankers who was Universal s Queen of Scream during the 40 s Notes publicist Stephanie Rudnick, a special installment called "The Brides"—surfacing in June 98—will showcase the blushing BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, BRIDES OF DRACULA, etc

●Jill-of all-trades Debbie Jackson has organized GIFT Productions—Girls in Film and Television The company s debut project, GIRLS ON FILM is currently shooting in Baltimore Jackson, who produced and co-wrote the screenplay admits the film is semi-autobiographical "It s about a couple of women who are breaking into the film industry Attempting to upgrade their careers the girls try to resist doing roles in bed & movies and slasher films Their 'cold turkey' policy collides into comedic and tragic consequences. We've heard all the stories about gullible ingenues—sucked into drugs sucked into career crippling quickies, turning 30, the works " Co-directing with Jo Jo Mullett the versatile Jackson plays one of the GIRLS, supporting cast includes Jennifer Huss Johnny Alonso (SERIAL MOM) and John Waters vet George Stover

● Last issue s interview with Hudson Leick, who plays XENA s recurrent nemesis, Callisto has prompted the following message from Bret Dadmore co founder of the actress fan club "*FF* readers are encouraged to tap into Ms Leick s web site—**http // www hudsonleickfan com/** It's inundated with photos of the lovely Leick, we've also loaded-in sound clips her bio-

graphical data, links to other Leick locales at al"

● I recently caught the L A screening of SHOPPING FOR FANGS the first feature-length film from Asian-American twentysome things Quentin Lee and Justin Lin Billed as a "Gener-Asian-X film," FANGS is an offbeat psychological thriller about alienated Asians trapped in a world where appearances are deceiving Radmar Jao is convincingly cast as Phil a shy accountant who believes that his unrequited lust is turning him into a werewolf Special kudos to Jeanne Chin who in her film debut does double duty as both Katherine a mentally disturbed housewife and Trinh a lesbian waitress who s pursuing Katherine! FANGS will be screened at the Toronto Film Festival and the Vancouver International Asian Film Festival this fall For further info check into web site **http://www mergin ftime.com** Meantime we ll be watching for Chin in Miramax s KK FAMILY LIST and SPEAK she plays a "half leopard" in the latter film

●James Ursini who collaborated with Alain Silver on the first and second editions of *The Vampire Film* is currently updating the bestseller for a revision that will premiere in fall 97 The book is a critical analysis of the genre the updated edition includes several addendums, including a special chapter devoted exclusively to female vampires "We're adding all of the vampire films that have been made since 1992," says Ursini "In recent years female vampires have become much more aggressive and have taken on some of the qualities that were formerly exclusive to male vampires Female vampires are central to films like RED LIPS, NIGHT SHADE NADJA and THE ADDICTION These post-feminist vampires are much more violent and dominant than we've seen before This is partially due to today's changing cultural values "

She s cropped from DONNIE BRASCO, but Stacey Linde s sci-fi role in GAME OF PLEASURE is "100% intact." The actress is currently modeling in England.

●GHOST STORIES a syndicated TV series premiering in the fall is described by producer Frederick Reppaport as "a very Gothic series show for people who love the classic ghost tales of times past like CARNIVAL OF SOULS THE HAUNTING and THE INNOCENTS We even have an element of THE TWILIGHT ZONE here " Each show consists of two 30-minute stories hosted by Rip Torn, a sort of surrogate Rod Serling The show s writers include director Frank Henenlotter (BASKET CASE) and yes, the episodes are cast with fledgling femmes fatales "Emilie Jo Tisdale is possibly the most Gothic-looking woman I've ever seen " says Reppaport "She s absolutely beautiful with big saucer-like eyes Cameron Hadley Taylor is very talented and extremely provocative as a woman being chased by a stalker who refuses to die In an episode called *Fatal Distraction* Amanda Chambers plays an obsessed ghost With her raven hair and eyes that pierce right through the cathode rays of the camera, Amanda is an heir apparent to Barbara Steele "

● The tantalizing Taaffe O'Connell (6 4) slimed n devoured by a smitten 10-ft maggot in Roger Corman s cult classic GALAXY OF TERROR (1981) has consulted psychic Michael Thaler for some business counsel she s developing an "as-yet-unfitled TV series a sort of '20/20 of metaphysics ' Michael s been dead-on accurate in terms of which people I should reject and which people are okay to work with I ll run a name by him and he ll be right every time " Must be true Anyway O Connell confirms that she secured the funding for the series pilot "There s been some serious interest in the project by a few different networks. Once we've completed the pilot, we'll promptly screen it for all potential buyers "

● Carolyn Reneé Smith, who posed for *FF* as Bettie Page and Vampirella landed the lead role in a straight-to-video thriller, THE EVIL WITHIN The actress portrays Terry an enigmatic proprietor of a boarding house whose guests start dropping off like flies "My character is a mild-mannered introvert who s obsessed with daytime television " says Smith "Her social life revolves around her tenants, and she has an imaginary boyfriend " Sal Mazzotta, the film s executive producer, co-stars with Smith Director Jeffrey Bycalek is already shopping for a theatrical release in Europe

●Neither Venesa Talor nor Jackie Lovell will be repriving their roles in FEMALIEN II a sequel to the 1995 release that fused sex with an extraterrestrial contrivance "I told the producers that I m not interested in doing any more nudity " says Lovell "though it's within their power to reuse some of the existing footage of me from the original FEMALIEN " Lovell will however encore her HEAD OF THE FAMILY vixen in a sequel to Full Moon's "horror/comedy" (it's tentatively titled BRIDE OF HEAD OF THE FAMILY Really)

Talor fresh off the set of Zalman King s RADIO SILENCE ed dressed the issue with "A FEMALIEN sequel? This is the first I've heard of it!"

●So you think you've mastered all the moves in TOMB RAIDER, the best-selling interactive game? Guess again Eidos Interactive is releasing TOMB RAIDER II just before Christmas Lara Croft, the 3-D animated heroine inspired by London actress Rhona Mitra, has successfully crossed the gender gap appealing to guys and gals Says Gary Kaith Director of Marketing Communications, "We've created a character that people are able to identify with in the action genre She's a tough, sexy femme fatale not a little prissy girl that breaks her nails and cries about it " This time around Lara is outfitted with new weapons including a harpoon gun and an M 16 rifle Makes G t JANE look like Nancy Drew

●*Playboy* model Stacey Linde a repertory player on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE and LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O BRIEN was decoratively cast as a bartender in the Al Pacino/ Johnny Depp mob movie DONNIE BRASCO "But if you rent the film from Blockbuster i'm gone!" smiles Linde "I got lost when they cropped the film to fit the video format All you see is a few strands of my hair in the corner of the frame!" But Linde is much more conspicuous in GAME OF PLEASURE (6 4) a sensuous sci-fi thriller that will premiere next month

●*FF* readers have sampled *Sean Fernald s Esoterica*, the **live interactive** talk show broadcast on the net's Pseudo On Line service (**http://pseudo com/netcast/shows/esoterica/index**) every Sunday at 7 pm (ET) The verdict is summarized by director/producer Kevin Summerfield "Accept no imitations! Esoterica is addictive, a potpourri of femmes fatales filmmakers, fetishism sci-fi screenwriters and comic books But I'd like to know more about Sean Fernald s co-host, the lovely Astra " We addressed this question to Mr Fernald who cautiously abridged his reply to the following "Astra is a mysterious creature Always unpredictable she s prone to speak her mind Her presence is critical to our show s popularity Viewers log in just to watch her breathe!" Past guests have included director Kevin Smith, *Vampirella* illustrator Amanda Conner, Myndy K, Gilbert Hernandez (*Love & Rock-*

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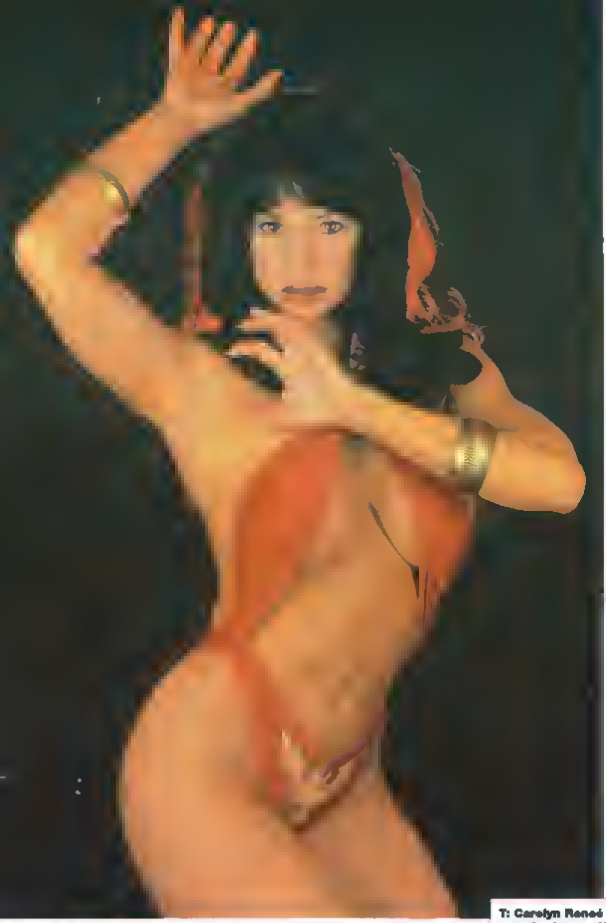
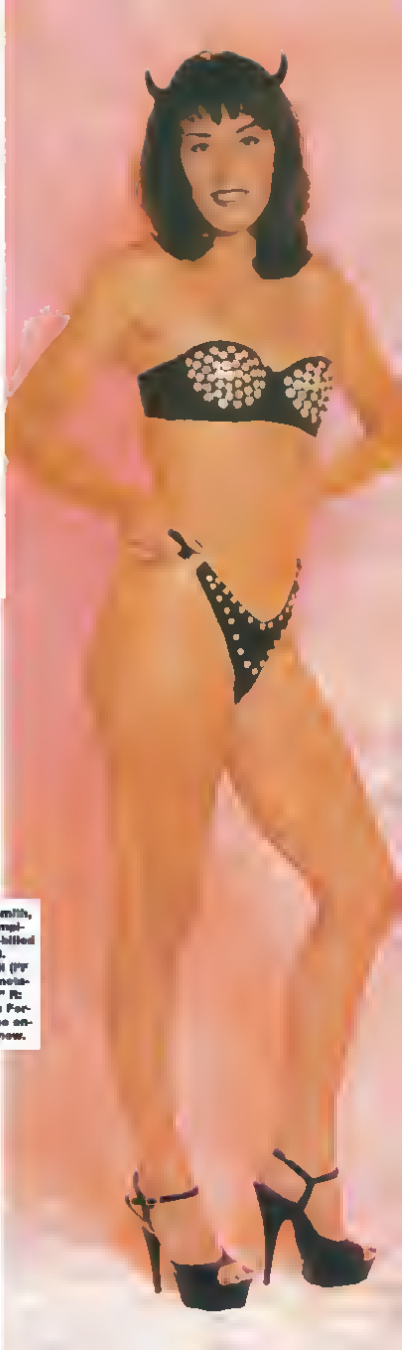




T: Carolyn Renee Smith, previewing our Vampirella spread, is top-billed in EVIL WITHIN. B: Tsaffe O'Connell (FF 6:4) is heading a "metaphysical TV pilot." R: Astra, host of Sean Fornald's Esoterica, the online, interactive show.

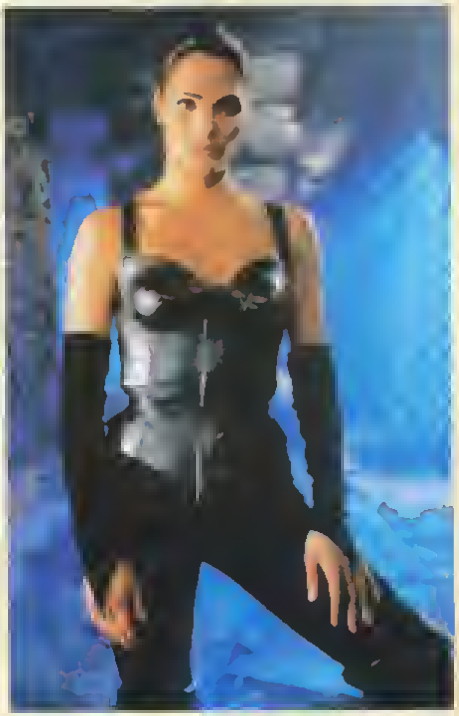
Fighting Femmes of MORTAL KOMBAT

RAZOR BLADE BRAIDS...AN AMORPHOUS, REGENERATIVE DEMON...A FOUR-ARMED HELLION...A CENTAUR: IT'S ROUND #2.

BY CRAIG REID

It's a definite trend—budgets are climbing from $75 million to almost $200 million. I guess first-time director John Leon would be branded a heretic in Hollywood's corporate milieu of extravagance. He not only delivered MORTAL KOMBAT: ANNIHILATION for $2.5 million less than its projected $37.5 budget, but wrapped production in 10 days less than its speculated 12-week schedule.

Talisa Soto, who's rogue's gallery includes a Bond bombshell (LICENSE TO KILL) and VAMPIRELLA, encores as Kitana. "She's supposed to be the best martial artist in her world," smiles Soto. "This sequel to MORTAL KOMBAT is just an extension of the first movie. Kitana is a 10,000-year-old princess who lives in this different world, and has incredible strength. I love this character, she's a challenge—I really had to give her my all. It was also a challenge to work with the green screen, you have to use your imagination. In this film, Kitana has to deal with seeing her mother come back from the dead, she's just trying to come to terms with it and how it happened."



MORTAL KOMBAT 2: ANNIHILATION. Talisa Soto returns as Kitana. "Trainers teach you to focus. I learned a Filipino stick-fighting technique called escrima."

Yessir, this time it's the heroic Chosen Ones versus Shao Kahn (Brian Thompson), wicked sovereign of the Outworld who getting a li'l too territorial, intent on overlapping his "province of doom" into an earthly sphere, Kahn violates the sacred laws of Mortal Kombat by opening a mystical "freeway" that links his domain with our planet. Chaos ensues.

Kahn's army of misfits include *Sindel*, a once-gorgeous queen turned cadaverous combatant; *Sheeva*, a 4-armed tower of power; *Motaro*, a monstrous Centaur (played by former American Gladiator, Deron McBee); *Ermac*, the enigmatic red Ninja who's a practitioner of telekinesis. And *Mileena*...

South African-born actress Musetta Vander plays sinful Sindel, ruler of Outworld. A femme fatale? With a feline flip of her flowing hair, Sin's barb-wire braids slice opponents to death. Then again, Vander—no stranger to genre films—is developing a penchant for playing lethal ladies (sample her gig as a praying mantis on an episode of BUFFY, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER).

Launching her career as a professional dancer, Vander

"It was a hard decision to replace Bridgette Wilson, but we wanted a different take on Sonya Blade. We found someone with that take."

Supermodel/actress Irina as Jade. "I saw movies to learn English. I love TERMINATOR and Jackie Chan movies but the first films I saw on the big screen, in Russia, were Fellini's 8 1/2 WAR AND PEACE, DR. ZHIVAGO."

hosted TELEMUZIK, a South African show that simulated an MTV format. Her theatrical performance in an L.A. engagement of *Soweto's Burning* landed her a recurrent role in the SUPERFORCE television series and guest appearances on MURDER SHE WROTE, VIPER and HIGHLANDER.

Science fiction films have offered her a profusion of beefy roles. Cast in the machismo-driven MONOLITH, Vander supported Lou Gossett Jr., Bill Paxton and John Hurt in their pursuit of a homicidal alien. As "Lash" in OBLIVION and its sequel, Vander literally cracked the ship in a netherworld where gunslinging varmints ate lead in showdowns with extraterrestrials. Co-starring with Kim Delaney in PROJECT METALBEAST, she played cat n' mouse with a genetically-engineered werewolf. Directed by husband Jeff Celentano in UNDER THE HULA MOON, the couple will reunite for GUNSHY this time around. Vander's character—a wiseass Atlantic City cocktail waitress—

Below, center: Musetta Vander—a veteran of sci-fi films (OBLIVION Parts I & II, MONOLITH, PROJECT METALBEAST)—as Queen Sindel, matriarch of Outworld. *L&r:* Renderings of Sindel by John Tobias, creator of the *Mortal Kombat* game.

"My favorite things are sci-fi and martial arts. I took everything from the first movie, and threw out everything that I rated below excellent."

reas—will be more down to earth

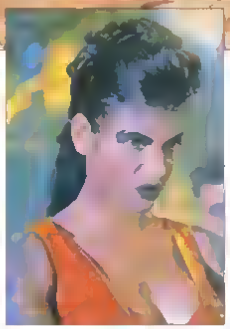
Raised in Colorado, actress Marjean Holden—profiled in *FF* 4-5—fights with two pairs of appendages as Sheeva. Making her film debut in BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE, Holden played plum roles in a string of sci-fi and action films: PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT II, BALLISTIC, NEMESIS, THE LOST WORLD, etc

Walking away from the 1988 Seoul Olympics as a Gold Medalist in Taekwondo, Dana Lynn Hee turned motivational speaker for The United Way. Later, a "stunt double" for other actors in the likes of SPECIES, THE LONG KISS GOODNIGHT and a couple of BATMAN epics, Hee claimed KOMBAT's "Milena" as her own

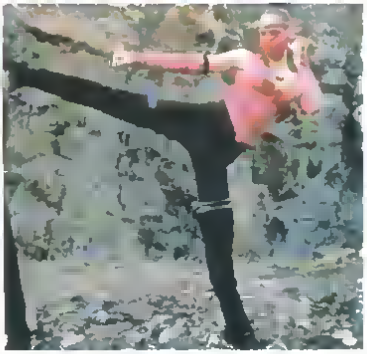
The Good Guys

Talisa Soto ("Kitana")

Raised in North Hampton,



T' Sindel (Musetta Vander) is abetted by 4-armed Sheeva (Marjean Holden). Extra appendages courtesy of Flat Earth f/x company. A: Holden (*FF* 4-5), as Sheeva, in a slow-burn. R: John Tobias' concept sketch for Sheeva.



A face-off (l) between Milena (SPECIES' Dana Hee, *b*) and Sonya Blade (Sandra Hess). The film's director describes the contretemps as "the most brutal woman fight I've ever seen."

Enchanting Eskimo of MORTAL KOMBAT

A SUPERMODEL, HER SEX APPEAL & A SEWING MACHINE.

BY CRAIG REID

She was born and raised in the very remote Asian-Russian town of Ulan-Ude, near the frozen shores of Lake Baikal. Later thawing-out in a myriad of countries, Irina circuitously sampled warmer climates. Seated in her Manhattan apartment, you prepare for some supermodel platitudes—maybe a hoary "rags to riches" story. But Irina, a high fashion who's turned to acting, hasn't abandoned her humility somewhere in an icy Russian hamlet. Her sense of wonder is quite genuine. "I have just arrived back from Paris yesterday morning. I fly out of Paris at eleven in the morning, arrive in New York at nine same morning, am at work by ten in morning. It is unusual feeling that, three hours ago, you can be in Paris and then on other side of world. It makes you feel so alive. You become complete and so big, and the world becomes so small."

So I ask her, "How did you get from small town Siberia to megatown New York?"

And she says, "By plane [*insert cymbal sound*]. But I could have taken a boat like after the revolution of 1917 [*insert cymbal sound*]. Honestly, I come from a different planet. When I got this chance to appear in this Earth, I proved that I was very lucky and privileged enough to join this very interesting society of people. They look *almost* like me: two hands, two legs, a head, they moving, they talking. So I had to learn how to live with them in a different world. Because growing up and living in a Communist country, it makes everything so bright and sharp. It is really quite a wonderful experience.

MK ANNIHILATION: Irina, who's posed for a profusion of front covers (*Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, et al), is cast as Juicy Jade.

"Actually, from the beginning, I knew I wanted to travel and see the rest of the world... travel and meet people and learn language and see different cultures. It was my goal. I went to Paris first and tried to find something for me, but it didn't work because I really was an alien. People look at me and don't know what to do with me because I look so different and so unique—they just were confused because I didn't match any kind of style of the fashion world.

"So no agency was interested. But that is okay because I had to learn French because I am in Paris, but my visa was about to finish, and I was not ready to go home, so I desiring to come to United States. The U.S. has always been like a different world. It is a different world because it is a different island that doesn't connect with the world, and is the center of all cultures and ways of living. So my next step was to go to America.

"So, three years ago, I bought a ticket and took a plane and come to New York. I was utterly shocked because I loved it right away. As I stepped off the plane, there was something about New York that made me feel like I was home. Very energetic. I love the energy, speed and there is something in the air keeps you alive. And coming from Siberia, it is obviously the opposite. We have large snow fields, forests and enormous nature, but here there are buildings that touch the skies and surround you everywhere and that was intimate to me."

Born to parents associated with the town's theatrical group, her home was a stone's throw away from Russia's only Buddhist

monastery, where Irina —a self-professed Buddhist—once met the Dalai Lama It runs in the family Her uncle is a lama at the Ivolginsky Datsan monastery. Her grandfather, the shaman of his small Siberian village, was dubbed "the leader of the deer" (Irina's own last name, Pantaeva, translates to "antlers of a deer")

Russia was progressively more liberated, by 1992, when Irina won a Moscow modeling competition She was introduced to Roland Levin, a Latvian-born photographer and one of the contest's organizers, who relocated to New York during his twenty year exile After a brief affair, Levin returned to the Big Apple and Irina transplanted her modeling experience to Paris

"You know," she smiles, "I guess I get into acting because I was born in a theater As a baby, my parents take me there all the time because I didn't have any babysitter So I grew up, day by day, in the theater, this beautiful environment that I could smell in the air and it has always been with me That is why I got into modeling, because I have always seen modeling as acting I always love to create characters My fantasy is to always love to make stories and observe everything that surround me"

Her first catwalk was scheduled for the Yves Saint Laurent pageant where the statuesque Irina's lightly-freckled, Oriental features—and willowy 5' 10", 118 pound frame—stole the limelight And the attention of Missoni, the Italian knitwear label Traversing to the U.S., Irina resumed her modeling career less than 72 hours after landing in New York Sweeping down an aisle of popping flashbulbs, Irina bumped into an ole' acquaintance at Anna Sui's fashion show Roland Levin Their reunion was impromptu--neither knew the other would be in attendance One month later, the couple was married in a civil ceremony

"In my culture, it is very small republic but has a lot of different theaters and dancing companies," comments Irina in a wistful moment of reflection "The movie industry in Russia was very strong and powerful because Russian industry start a long time ago So when I grow up, I watch many old black and white classic films"

I interject—sans condescension, honest!—that my preferred Soviet film is Sergei Eisenstein's ALEXANDER NEVSKY It's one of the few Russian movies that Roger Corman hasn't cut-up for stock footage But I have the feeling Irina suspects my admiration was patronizing I mean—great score, great battle scenes—but NEVSKY is a trifle dull. "Ah, ALEXANDER NEVSKY," says Irina, straining for a comeback "A beautiful film When I first come to New York, I speak no English—I had to learn in a school, but it was so primitive that I couldn't use it So what I did, I went out a lot to see movies and could learn English I love TERMINATOR and Jackie Chan movies but the first movies I saw, on big screen in Russia, were WAR AND PEACE, FELLINI'S 8 1/2 and DR ZHIVAGO. ZHIVAGO almost break my heart It was very real and perfect in approach in the presentation of Russia, even though I know no Russians worked in this movie (*laughs*) But it was very beautiful and powerful"

Irina made her film debut in an obscure Russian film titled THE ADVENTURES OF HADJA NASREDIN But her U.S. exposure was postponed until the producers of a martial arts movie beckoned *Flashback to* the 1996 Oscar ceramony Dozens of elitist models posed in variable fashions that tied-in with the Oscar nominees CASINO leisure suits, BRAVEHEART kilts, the whole nine yards Fortuitously, photos of Irina, clad in SENSE AND SENSIBILITY's ruffles and ringlets, were among the spreads that had been globally syndicated A few weeks later, she returned a call from the casting director of MORTAL KOMBAT ANNIHILATION and approved the "Jade" role

"It was a wonderful introduction to the martial art through a guy name Lawrence Tam," says Irina. "My fight scene took place in Thailand, I spend six months training and create my Jade character to be a powerful, sexy warrior I find it interesting approach to get a man's attention by doing action and to seduce him by doing fighting I had to really concentrate. In the morning before fight, I kept talking to myself 'Irina, this is your biggest chance for the first time and you have to do it' I was very, very nervous

"But when you are in front of camera, it is another thing It was a hundred degrees, more people are getting sick My costume was a green baby-type car suit with very long, tight leather boots with high heels The heat was high and my heart was running out of my body We do it once I go through all the movement and meditate I feel something moving inside of me, something big something great was coming to me, I feel like I am levitating I ask John [Leonetti, the film's director], 'Can I do it one more time please He said, 'Okay'

"We were using sticks I was Jade and Robin [Shou] was Liu Kang. My head was spinning, I feel nothing under my feet, I'm flying

ANNIHILATION's good guys: Robin Shou (*Liu Kang*), Talisa Soto (*Kitana*), Chris Conrad (*Johnny Cage*) & Irina (*Jade* "I loved my character so much, I can't get away from her")

Jade and Liu Kang pause for a little rär "Interesting approach My character seduces men by being fighting"

The honeymoon is over between Liu Kang and Jade. "I used a stick on Robin [Shou]," recounts Irina. "This fight scene took place in Thailand. I spent six months in training so that my character would grow into a powerful and sexy warrior."

Than, suddenly, I hear people cheering and clapping I open my eyes like I was dreaming, then realized my fight was done I loved my character so much that I can not get away from her I'm so glad and proud that I come from my home in Siberia, all the way to here I found my way in life."

Her waif-like fascination with film not withstanding, Irina hasn't suckered herself into naivete She realizes the longevity of a modeling career, which fades fast at age 30 She's equally cognizant that long-range survival, in the film medium, leans less on decorative roles and entirely on dramatic aptitude She recounts a close encounter with a sewing machine as her personalized metaphor for endurance

"When I was five years old, my mother had a sewing machine It is old and very beautiful but very heavy As a child, I was very tall and thin and I couldn't fit into the clothes that merchants were selling—and I didn't want to wear them because, in Russia, everyone has to wear the same dresses and colors My mother was making clothes for me, and I would create some things for myself One day I decided I wanted to make a dress that I had just made a drawing of, I become so crazy about the idea I learned that if you want something, you have to do it yourself So I wanted to transport the machine from one place and put it elsewhere in the house As I was holding this machine, I took one, two steps and I fall down on the floor The sewing machine landed on top of me.

"It happened so fast I was laying down on the floor with this monster pinned down on me I got so upset that I didn't call my mother, who was in the other room I was fighting this machine for a long time I say to myself, 'Okay, you hit me, I will get you now' Literally, I was fighting this thing My mother, concerned with the silence, came over to help me out But, all this time, I was fighting this little scene in my life became a symbol that in anything that I have to go through, I have to fight If I don't fight, I will not be alive I always remember this"

I asked Irina if she tempers her personal preservation with an equally unbridled emotion "Yes," she quickly answers "Love Because love, for me, is the beginning of everything Love keeps you alive, that is how we all appeared in this world and love gives you life, power and the energy to go through If I don't love, I think I will die." □

Director John Leonetti rehearses Irina for kombat: "The heat was high and my heart was running out of my body I asked John if we could do the fight again."

"The sequel is more advanced 3-D effects, more fighting women, more plot...everything I wanted do in MORTAL KOMBAT but budget did not allow."

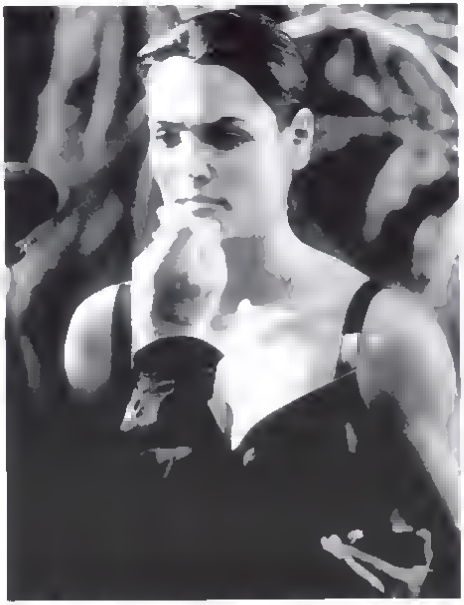
Massachusetts, Soto is the only actress from the original MORTAL KOMBAT cast to encore in the sequel Upon graduation from high school, she pursued a career as a fashion model One decade ago, a 20-year-old Soto moved to L A , minimizing her modeling assignments, she buckled down for serious dramatic training,

"For my first break," recounts Soto, "I was lucky enough that there was a director who was interested in me, instead of having to fight for the role It was in Paul Morrissey's SPIKE OF BENSON HURST" Subsequently cast in SUNCHASER, THE DOORS and DON JUAN DeMARCO, Soto played the title role of VAMPIRELLA but her recollection is not exactly sentimental· "Well, it was

John Leonetti, director: "A clash between Milena & Sonya Blade is the most brutal female fight I've seen."

such a small role that it took only four weeks to shoot So I said, 'Why not?' It was so funny They were dying for me to do it because of my martial arts experience—fighting was critical to the character's chemistry Now, I really love *practicing* martial arts, but they thought I was like a *serious* martial arts fighter I'm like, 'No, guys ' I would love to do it more seriously, but you have to be committed—you can't just do it once in a while "

Irina, formerly Irina Pantaeva ("Jade") Nurtured by



7 Talisa Soto debuting as Kitana in the first MORTAL KOMBAT ('95), returns w/ Hong Kong-born Robin Shou—who encores as Liu Kang—in the '97 sequel (/)

a family of artists and shamen on the banks of Siberia's Lake Baikal, the supermodel nailed a contract with Levi's jeans in addition to posing for the likes of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Elle*

Sandra Hess (Sonya Blade) Tough act to follow! Bridgette Wilson played the not-so-fey Blade in the original '95 release Why wasn't she cast in the sequel? "It was a very hard decision , but we wanted a slightly different take on her character," says producer Larry Kasanoff, "—and we found someone who had that take someone who could be more exact in regard to our vision of the character " *Someone* was actress Sandra Hess, whose career originated in her native Switzerland as a tyke shuffling between TV commercials and stage Upon completing one year's attendance at Zurich's Law School, Hess—impassioned with acting—forfeited jurisprudence and moved to L.A. She promptly tallied appearances in film (SNIPER, ENCINO MAN, NIGHT WATCH) and TV (LOIS AND CLARK, SEA QUEST, et al)

Though ANNIHILATION's myriad of exotic actresses are likely to attract male audiences, Kasanoff—former president and co-founder of James Cameron's Lightstorm Entertainment—denounces an interview prepared by Alan Jones for *Cinefantastique* "MORTAL KOMBAT ANNIHILATION is not 'more sexual ' Basically, I took everything from the first movie and rated everything excellent, good, fair and poor Everything below excellent, I threw out But, essentially, I have always been interested in making a movie that combined martial arts and science fiction, my two favorite things I love Hong Kong's martial art movies But, while the martial arts are good, the stories and production values lag behind typical Hollywood standards When I first saw MORTAL KOMBAT, it was that combination of martial arts and sci-fi that I loved What I wanted to do in my theory of combining martial arts and science fiction is great fights where the coup d'etat move is a special effect

"Now for ANNIHILATION, I wanted more stunning locations, a more integral plot, more advanced 3-D special effects, more beautiful fighting women It's everything I wanted to do in MORTAL KOMBAT, but budget or technology did not allow "

Director John Leonetti admits MKA flaunts its sex appeal "but to a certain degree It's subtle The costumes are pretty nice to look at, and there is a mud wrestling fight between Sonya and Mileena Yesterday, we were going back over the music deciding on what tune to use during this scene On one hand, we wanted something fun . something that is tropicana, or a strip club, because the boys and guys would dig that But on the other hand, I think I am going with something a bit more hard edged It is the most brutal women fight I have seen It is still sexy enough, but there is a reality between a really cool chick fight and a little bit of mud wrestling as well."

Contrasting both MORTAL KOMBAT films, Leonetti notes the precursor "took place in a tournament situation but, in the sequel, there are no rules Shao Kahn cheats and opens a portal from Outworld to Earth He says Earth, created in six days, will be destroyed and, by the seventh day, man shall rest in peace The Mortal Kombat mythology is the idea that by believing in yourself, you can accomplish more that you ever you imagined you could Now we take that a step further Once you learn to fight or work together, you can overcome It's with that optimism that our heroes battle Shao Kahn

"It's a story of a functional family and dysfunctional family The dysfunctional family is Shao Kahn's clan who only care about greed and power The Chosen Ones, who have left their families to come together to overcome evil, are the functional family

"This sequel was, by far, the hardest thing I have ever done One of the toughest aspects of this film was its physically challenges and the sickness that lasted throughout this movie More people got sick on this film than on any other film of my career It all actually started in London, it was so cold The smoke and the fullers earth that they used in England, which is banned in Hollywood, created fire and the grit We were all inhaling a lot of stuff. I got bronchitis Then we got to Thailand where it was hot, humid, muggy Tons and tons of bugs A lot of people got pneumonia I had it, but I never missed a day of

"It was fun but the film was, by far, the hardest thing I've ever done. More folks got sick on this film than on any other project of my career."

T: Bridgette Wilson (*FF* 4·1) was cast as Sonya Blade in the '95 release. Blade's back in ANNIHILATION but, this time around, she's played by Sandra Hess (/)

work. Many people were in the hospital. But, my God this movie is beautiful."

Audience polled during test screenings of MORTAL KOMBAT expressed disappointment with the fight scenes. An extra $5 million dollars was invested in the production of two additional battles: Johnny Cage vs. Scorpion in the dungeon/trellis sequence and the confrontation between Liu Kang and the reptile. "I do think they were the best fight scenes in the movie," says Leonetti. "We tried to organically use our sets like Jet Li does in his films, like in Tsui Hark's ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA. I am fond of his work. Although Hong Kong films usually don't use storyboards, we did because I think it is ultimately more organized."

Were Hong Kong's fighting femmes, indispensable to the Asian action market, an influence on KOMBAT's casting? Leonetti admits, "Indirectly. The women in our movies are adapted from the *Mortal Kombat* video game, which has strong female characters."

Soto recalled, "We'd work out and stretch so we don't pull so many muscles and groins, especially in England because it was so cold. We would stop moving, the muscles get cold, then we have to fight and we start to pull things. We thought we would be happy in Thailand but it was like a hundred degrees, and we're fighting outside and it is just hot and we're dying."

The fight choreography, is augmented with the melding of CGI technology (3-D animation, 2-D morphing, digital compositing) and prosthetics to create a menagerie of mythical fighters. Flat Earth, the company organized by Kevin O'Neill, Kevin Kutchaver and Doug Beswick to match the likes of XENA with subhuman competition, was hired to furnish the f/x.

One priority was Sheeva, the 4-four-armed fighter

continued on page 60

B: Prior to her KOMBAT casting as "Sindel," Musetta Vander whipped the cast of OBLIVION, a sci-fi saga, into shape. R: John Tobias' production art of Sindel.

SCREAM KING

HIS *SCREAM*PLAY SPAWNED TWO SEQUELS—AND ANOTHER "TEEN/TERROR" FRANCHISE.

BY WILLIAM WILSON GOODSON JR.

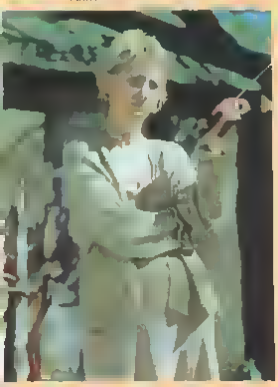
Christened "Horror Boy," he was among *Entertainment* magazine's "100 Most Creative People." Kevin Williamson is currently—in Hollywood parlance—*hot*. SCREAM, his second script, was bankrolled for under $15 million and grossed over $100 million. And that ain't all. A TV series he's producing for Columbia-Tristar will be on the tube by the time this magazine is on newsstands. SCREAM 2—yes, he wrote the sequel—will debut during the Yuletide season and I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER, based on another Williamson script, is in post-production. Regarding the latter film, Williamson recounts, "Columbia approached me after I sold SCREAM and said, 'We have got this Lois Duncan book, and it's got a great idea, and maybe you could make it really scary.'

"So I read it and said, 'Yeah' because I really responded to the characters in the book, and their predicament, because they make one wrong decision and it may cost them their lives."

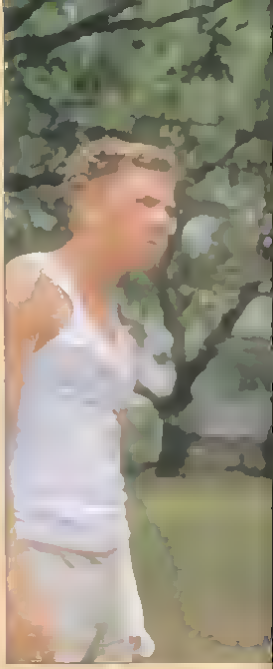
Williamson admits, however, only the book's central concept survived intact. "It's the setup of the four kids involved in a hit and run. It's a juvenile adult novel written in the '70s, just after the Vietnam war, and not a lot happened. I just didn't think it was very cinematic. Once you find out who the killer is in the book, you know it would never work in a film."

"I upped the stakes, added a few more characters and the villain, I really changed that. I changed the setting to a North Carolina fishing village. I wanted to include the whole fishing world: the nets, the hooks, the gaff. This story will, I hope, start a new urban legend—*The Fisherman*!—so we can have Michael Meyers but not really have the same old story."

Making his U.S. debut as director, Scotsman Jim Gillespie (GHOSTBUSTERS OF EAST FINCHLEY) shot the movie, "in and around Southport," during Summer '97. Cast as the four friends who abandon a hit and run: Sarah Michelle Gellar (BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER), Jennifer Love Hewitt (PARTY OF FIVE), Ryan Phillippe and Freddie Prinze Jr. They're supported by Bridgette Wilson (*FF* 4.1) and Anne



She eluded the VOLCANO, but will Anne Heche survive the SUMMER?



Their LAST SUMMER: Ryan Phillippe, Sarah M. Gellar, Jennifer Love Hewitt.

I KNOW YOU DID LAST SUMMER: The past haunts Jennifer Love Hewitt, Ryan Phillippe & Sarah Michelle Gellar: who abandoned their hit and run victim.

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Their LAST SUMMER: Ryan Phillippe, Sarah M. Gellar, Jennifer Love Hewitt.

Williamson admits taking 'lots' from Lois Duncan's novel, I Know What You Did Last Summer: "The setup is [illegible] and [illegible]. I didn't think it was cinematic so I upped the stakes, adding a few more characters and the villain (The Fisherman)." R: PARTY OF FIVE's Jennifer Love Hewitt is stalked by stranger.

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She studied the VOLCANO, but will Anne Heche survive the SUMMER?

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER: The cast boards Jennifer Love Hewitt, Ryan Phillippe & Sarah Michelle Gellar who abandoned their hit and run victim.

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER: Bridgette Wilson (r.), whose track record includes MORTAL KOMBAT and NIXON, shows up as Elsa Shivers.

Transplanting the topography to a fishing village environment didn't strain Williamson's creativity; after all, he grew up a Carolina fisherman. "Matter of fact, my dad was my consultant on the movie," smiles the screenwriter. "He took me around the boat and he showed me the fish houses, the wrenches, the A-frames and how the outriggers work, just so I could make it realistic. I wanted to utilize every inch of the boat that we could."

Williamson had sailed with his father only a few times while growing up in the provincial laws: "My dad was very hesitant to show me the world of fishing, because he really wanted me to go to college. He had different aspirations for me other than winding up on a fishing boat. It is very seducing: you go out on a boat for two weeks and you make a large sum of money. Actually, you can't any more because the fishing industry has been so hurt by government regulations and so forth."

As a youngster Williamson was introduced to filmmaking upon finding a forgotten 8mm camera purchased by his parents sometime in the '60s from Sears Roebuck. The fledgling storyteller subsequently ground-out "short shorts. Then, of course, the video age came around and I got a video camera. I have been making movies since I was 12."

Graduating from East Carolina University with a BFA in Theater Arts, Williamson moved to New York in 1987. "I always wanted to write but I really couldn't afford to go off to NYU and I got a scholarship in acting at ECU so I sort of fell into it. I loved it and wrote all the rest. I wanted to do it all. I sort of fell into the acting side of it all through college and the first couple of years in New York. He developed

It's Kevin "Horror Boy" Williamson.

Williamson admits taking liberties w/ Lois Duncan's novel, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*: "The setup is kids [/] involved in a hit and run; I didn't think it was cinematic so I ramped the stakes, adding a few more characters and the villain (The Fisherman)." /|- PARTY OF FIVE's Jennifer Love Hewitt is stalked by avenger

Hecha (VOLCANO) One year after the accident, the "friends" abruptly conclude they're being stalked by a clever and vicious killer during a July 4th celebration

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I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Bridgette Wilson (4 1), whose track record includes MORTAL KOMBAT and NIXON, shapes-up as "Elsa Shivers"

It's Kevin "Horror Boy" Williamson.

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER: Sarah Michelle Gellar, Ryan Phillippe and Jennifer Love Hewitt (r) pay the price for their previous summer's revelry and the resultant death of a stranger. Previously stalked by MUNCHIE ('92), Hewitt—who's imperiled as "Julie James" (c)—appears on MTV as hostess of teen issues.

a resume, which included minor gigs in commercials, films (DIRTY MONEY, DEAD RUN), television (IN LIVING COLOR, ANOTHER WORLD) and on stage.

Making the transition to California, Williamson landed behind-the-scenes work. "I worked as an assistant director for three and a half years. To tell the truth, I have always wanted to write and direct and, finally, I got so frustrated with my position. I realized I was the only one that was going to get me out of that. I couldn't wait for someone to come along, and point at me, and say, '*You*—here is a wonderful career.' So I had to go out and make it happen. That is when I started writing and truly, like four months after I started writing, I finished MISS PRINGLE and pretty much sold it—in a couple of months—to Interscope, Hollywood Pictures. But there is no longer a Hollywood Pictures, so it got caught in development hell and it's been there ever since.

"What happens is, first, you need an agent. I had a friend, who has a friend who walks the dog of an agent, and that's sort of how I got to the agent.

"You write a script, you give it to your agent, he reads it. They devise a plan. '*Who is this material best suited for?*' '*What studio?*' '*A big action film, maybe it should go to Warner Brothers instead of Fox or Paramount.*' Then, more specifically, you have to take it to producers who have deals with those studios. So for Warner Brothers, with a big action picture, you probably want to take it to Joel Silver. He reads it and, if he likes it, he takes it to Warner Brothers and says, 'You have *got* to buy this script—I want to produce it.' He has a deal there and they know his ability to make movies. That's kind of how it works.

"With SCREAM, my agent took it around and, basically, Paramount and Morgan Creek and Oliver Stone and Miramax all sort of made bids. At the end of the day, it came down to Oliver Stone and Bob White at Miramax. They had just started Dimension Films, which is a whole company dedicated to genre films. Actually, Oliver Stone's company offered more money, but we had no guarantee that Oliver Stone would make the film right away. It might sit on the shelves for two years, or it might never get made. I had that experience with MISS PRINGLE.

"My lawyer, she was the voice of reason. '*Forget*

about the money, Kevin. You're starting your career, it's more important to have a movie up on the screen." True to their word, one year to the day, Miramax bought it and it had wrapped.

"I got paid a flat fee and I got production bumps based on boxoffice performance. No one expected it to do as well as it did, so I received all my bumps—*in abundance*. I get net points so I will see money from that, but that's very standard. The only thing that is not normal are production bumps: we had to negotiate those."

SCREAM has often been described as a testimonial to the previous decade's "teen kill" movies. Wes Craven, whose past films (LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT, DEADLY FRIEND, NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET) contributed to the genre's body count, directed and deflected *Time* magazine's perplexity with SCREAM's "unaccountably indulgent reviews." Notes Williamson, "My love of horror movies was what got me to write that script. I know all this stuff inside and out, and I just thought scary movies have all been done to death. I finally asked myself, '*What would scare me?*' I'm a kid, I'm a product of the VCR generation, I grew up next to a Blockbuster, I have seen all these movies. Then I thought, '*That's what would scare me*'—if I was watching a movie about myself.

"I think the film worked because the characters' knowledge of horror may save them or may not—you don't know. It may not be really be like it is in the movies, but completely different."

Williamson's original title was the more facetious SCARY MOVIE, but "we changed the title halfway through production, even before we chose the mask—and it turned out the mask looked like Edvard Munch's famous *Silent Scream* painting.

"When I sold them the original script, I also gave them a five-page treatment for the sequel. So they knew I had it, and they wanted to make it right away, so I was kind of the only guy they could get."

"Paramount, Miramax and Oliver Stone bid on SCREAM. Stone offered more money than Miramax for the script, but no guarantee it wouldn't sit on a shelf."

SCREAM 2. ↑: Neve Campbell shots Jerry O'Connell. Wes Craven, who helmed Courteney Cox & Campbell in Part I (↓), returns with both women for the sequel.

Wes Craven encored as the director of the sequel, SCREAM II. Williamson is billed as screenwriter *and* executive producer. Most of Part I's cast will be returning, observes Williamson, "with a few obvious exceptions." Neve Campbell (*FF* 5.9), Courteney Cox and David Arquette reprise their original roles but reside in a new community; naturally, chaos ensues. Williamson reveals that he's contractually obligated to write SCREAM III but a second sequel won't be a certainty unless Part II's commercial success can be equated with its precursor.

But look at the odds: James Cameron's TITANIC can sink careers unless it can recoup $200+ million. Williamson's scripts, tailored for comparatively low-budget projects, aren't gauged on spectacle but wit and visceral panache.

Williamson is also committed to DAWSON'S CREEK, an hour-long TV series shot in Southport, N.C. In addition to writing the pilot, he has a firm order for 13 episodes from the WB network, which has scheduled the show for a Tuesday (8 p.m.) time slot.

"It's not a thriller at all," says the writer. "It's the story about a boy coming of age in a small coastal town. It's sort of the trials and tribulations of growing up. It's pretty autobiographical, the boy wants to grow up to be Steven Spielberg." Cast includes James Van Der Beek, Joshua Jackson and Katie Holmes.

Cable and Broadcasting magazine reports that a screening of the DAWSON CREEK's pilot qualified it as "one of the most sought after shows of the 1997-'98 season" among advertising representatives; however, UPN's chief executive officer, Lucie Salhany, attacked the show—which WB is marketing for family viewing—as a hypocritical. The season opener will reportedly include a covert discussion about masturbation, and a story about a teenage boy pursuing an affair with a high school teacher.

No later than September '98, Williamson will direct a science fiction film called THE FACULTY, "sort of a homage to THE INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS." So how does it feel to be *hot*? "There is a whole procedure called the 'development process'—it can make you want to leave town and go sell real estate in Kansas." □

JULIE DELPY PARISIAN WEREWOLF

FRANCE'S SEXIEST EXPORT FINDS A HOME IN HORROR PIC.

BY ALAN JONES

Since playing the madonna-whore love interest in Krzysztof Kieslowski's critically acclaimed THREE COLORS: WHITE, the chic Parisienne hasn't looked back. Young, blonde, sexy and very French, Julie Delpy's celebrity is expanding beyond cult and regional recognition. In fact, she has emerged as the European counterpart of the twentysomething American "brat pack" riding the wave of post-grunge, pre-Millennium alternative cinema. Directors drool over Delpy's charismatic appeal. Roger Avary, who cast her in KILLING ZOE as a student hooker who's smitten with safe-breaker Eric Stoltz, claims that she "possesses qualities you don't find in American actresses. Her face just catches the light. she is like the moon—luminescent." And Richard Linklater, who starred with Delpy and Ethan Hawke in his Slacker romance BEFORE SUNRISE, insists he likes "the way her mind works. she has a kooky side, too. She can communicate intensity, depth and mystery. She's like an older woman in a young body."

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS: Delpy as sultry Serafine: "I'm usually cast in meaningful parts where I learn reams of dialogue. This tested me in a different way."

As she greets me on the Gothic church set of her most commercial project yet, AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS, it's impossible not to catch your breath once you're drawn into Julie Delpy's flawless beauty, cool allure and serenity of purpose. Plus, she's screamingly funny! Her great sense of humor, usually self-deprecating, is warm and winning. It's an old cliche to scribble "the moment you meet her, you feel like you've been close friends for years," but that's precisely the intimate atmosphere Delpy creates. "Let's get one thing straight before we talk," says the actress. "I'm not just the cute little French girl in movies. I'm not like Juliette Binoche or Isabelle Adjani who only do French girl parts. Nor do I feel French. French people in Hollywood all stick together and I don't like that. My friends are from Europe and all over America."

Delpy's addiction to drama is genetically inbred. her parents—a British mother and an American father—were both stage actors in Paris where she was raised. "I enjoyed acting from an early age," remarks Delpy. "I used to dress up and play characters with my father. He played Romeo and I was Juliet. He would also take me to workshops given by his fringe theater group in Paris." Delpy's father also furnished his offspring with a film education. the pair would attend the cinema, four times a week, to screen the works of Orson Welles, Ingmar Bergman and John Cassavetes. Her mother insisted on leavening this weighty load with a diet of Disney. When Delpy turned 14, her parents hired an agent. The ingenue was subsequently selected by Jean-Luc Godard to appear in his sardonic thriller, DETECTIVE (1985). She recounts that her role as a clarinettist was "easy because Godard is a very kind man with young people. I was very naive, and not very strong, and he didn't want to hurt or traumatize me."

Landing more substantive roles, Delpy was cast in a string of European films: Agnieska Holland's EUROPA, EUROPA, Carlos Saura's THE DARK NIGHT, Betrand Tavernier's THE PASSION OF BEATRICE and Volker

7: American werewolf Tom Everett Scott observes Delpy's transformation (effects by Magi-con). Delpy & Scott trade quips with a cadaverous jokester (above) and huddle with director Anthony Waller (r).

JULIE DELPY

"MUTE WITNESS scared me. I wanted to work with the man who had the power to frighten me."

Anthony Waller's $26 million AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS proved equally compatible with Delpy's working credo "I thought Anthony's feature debut, MUTE WITNESS, was so brilliant on all levels—technically, visually and artistically It was the first film, in ages, to scare me to death and I wanted to work with the man who had the power to frighten me I have respect for someone who can evoke that emotion What a great talent to possess, to be able to terrify an audience so they have to scream out loud I loved CARRIE when I was a child and became a confirmed horror fan because of it Recent horror films have made me laugh more than anything else but I think AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS will be the first one in ages to successfully scare,

Schlondorff's VOYAGER Reunited with Godard for his baroque adaptation of KING LEAR (1987), Delpy supported an eclectic cast that included Woody Allen, Molly Ringwald and Norman Mailer. Though the filmmaker and actress have remained friends, they never again worked together. "For a little while, Godard was pissed at me because I did another film instead of one of his films He's a really brilliant man but he has a very possessive temperament"

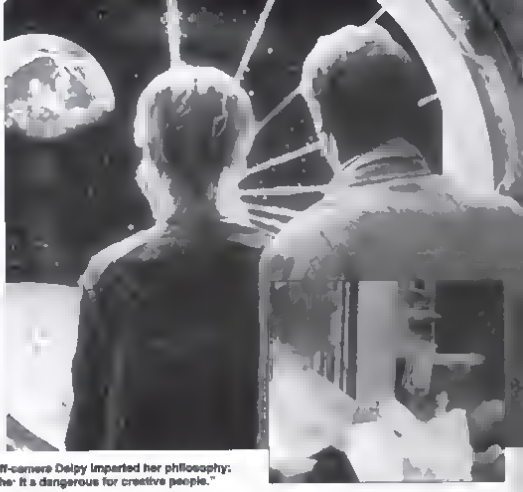
Later that year, Delpy was Cesar-nominated as Best Newcomer for Leos Carax's MAUVAIS SANG (BAD BLOOD) It wasn't until six years later that THREE COLORS WHITE would unlock Delpy from her self-described "pure look. Before that, when I used to act, I was a bit tortured. My personality isn't just that of a pretty, young, fresh girl and people did not know how to handle me Now it's easier, because I know what I am like. I am more balanced between my looks and personality"

The 25-year-old Delpy only collaborates with talent whom she admires, it's the reason she worked with "Dick" Linklater on BEFORE SUNRISE and opted to recently wrap a couple of genre films—Enki Bilal's TYKHO MOON "comic strip" and Jean-Michel Roux's science fiction saga, A THOUSAND WONDERS OF THE UNIVERSE

and amuse, both at the same time"

Delpy was cast as Serafine, a reluctant lycanthrope who attempts suicide by throwing herself off the Eiffel Tower But American tourist Andy (Tom Everett Scott) rescues her, dooming himself in the process He falls in love with Serafine, whose father keeps her incarcerated behind bars during each full moon a serum is in development that will inhibit her predatory impulses However, when Serafine does put the bite on Andy, he learns the only way to recover his human identity is to cut out her heart and eat it

"I wanted to do something entirely different," smiles Delpy, "and you can't get much different than playing a



Cast as Lena in TYKHO MOON, a 1996 sci-fi epic directed by Enki Bilal, an off-camera Delpy imparted her philosophy: "People taking Prozac frighten me. I'm against drugs that alter your psyche: it's dangerous for creative people."

werewolf. I was a fan of the original John Landis film, AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON [1981], although I saw it on a re-release as I was too young to see its original debut. I've never done this sort of special effects film before. I'm usually cast in meaningful parts, where I have to learn reams of dialogue and appear in every scene. This tests me in a different way, as I'm usually so lazy when it comes to the physical side of moviemaking. All the stunts, make-up and action are the complete opposite of what I'm used to. The luxury for me in AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS is that I actually have days off in the schedule. That's rare for me. Nor are these types of film made in France, so it was my chance to learn what making such an effects-laden monster movie was all about."

Though awed by the pyrotechnical pageantry, Delpy admits, "It took me ages to understand the character of Serafine. I mean, what is the psychology of a werewolf? Okay, she's a reluctant werewolf, tired of contaminating innocent victims with rabid disease as she roams the Paris streets. But you can't read books about werewolves and it took me a long time to pin Serafine down. When I realized I couldn't build any personality frame to hold onto—apart from making her very hyper—I felt freed by the fact there were no constraints. What does a girl feel like just before the full moon, when she knows she's going to transform into a hairy beast? Something like how she feels when she's going to have her period. That's the way I chose to play it, tied into hormonal changes—only more ferocious. It's the first film to deal with the true full horror of PMS!"

The film's director tailored the Serafine role especially for Delpy, who promptly reacted with unbridled panic. "I'm a habitual worrier and I worry about things all the time, even if they are not my problems. I have a very logical mind, which is strange for an actress dealing in feelings and emotions. I hate it when things go out of sync. But when I'm working, I don't have time to think about that—which is why I tend to work a lot. That's why I've never seen myself as serious in my films, only when I'm off-camera.

"I think [WEREWOLF director] Anthony Waller wanted someone who would make the change into a werewolf more dramatic, because of the *personality* contrasts. I suppose I'm the last person you'd imagine to do that, and that's why it will be scarier when I do transform. I've never been able to scare people before, so it's rather fun. As I get older, I feel freer to explore that darker side. These aren't cuddly wolves in AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS. They are vicious monsters. When I told my friends and family I was going to play a werewolf, they all went, *'Ahh!'* I may be slightly fluffier than the other wolves, but are they in for a surprise!"

Her exploration of a werewolf's psyche notwithstanding, Delpy has no qualms about pegging AMERICAN WEREWOLF as "*action, action, action*." Anthony has more on his plate, with the special effects and visual side of things, rather than bothering to tell me anything about acting technique. We block out what we are supposed to do before each scene, and then get on with it as powerfully as we can. The only major discussion we've had concerned my accent. I've lived in France since I was 6 years old and my French accent is normal. We decided to keep it that way and not overdo it. The Americans have a habit of caricaturing French accents like, for example, Kevin Kline in FRENCH KISS—but we decided against that here as everything else was so over the top."

Delpy in KILLING ZOE, executive produced by Quentin Tarantino. "It's Generation X's first bank caper film, an ultra-violent screamfest," wrote Roger Ebert.

Delpy noted the shoot had

JULIE DELPY

"I chose to tie-in the werewolf with hormonal changes. It's the first film to deal with the horror of PMS."

its down side "The 14-week location filming in Luxembourg after a week of shooting on the Eiffel Tower! Luxembourg is horrible It's called the most boring country in Europe and, after a day here, you can see why I like cities with life but here it's like Switzerland—only worse! The streets are empty, no one goes out to restaurants or clubs *what do they do?* My apartment is next to a church and they keep ringing the bells at eight o'clock in the morning, every day, which is a nightmare when you're working nights I understand, from a financial point of view, why they had to come to Luxembourg for tax breaks but I never want to come here again as long as I live"

If adequately marketed, there's a likelihood that AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS will be Delpy's most commercial, and mainstream film, to date But the actress says, "Making a profitable film wasn't my prime consideration for doing it This isn't a calculated attempt to stretch my international film career or become more of a celebrity I'm not comfortable with that More than I want success, I want to grow in my life I want to be a person before being a star I don't think you are really balanced if you are unhappy in your life Celine, the part I played in BEFORE SUNRISE, was probably the closest to me I, too, am looking for something And I don't know what it is That film only explored the romantic, sweet side of my character I have this darker, more real side too"

Delpy's moved to Los Angeles She says, "I wanted to leave behind the snobberies and petty jealousies of Paris But when I get bored with L.A., I'll leave and go somewhere else It took me a while to settle down in L.A. I hated it at first, but now I've adjusted to the car culture I have more stuff in my car now—my gloves, my clothes, my Tampax!—than in my apartment I made a big investment coming to Hollywood, so I want to make it work I have hired a publicist, a manager, a great agent and I'm doing all the right stuff You can't only just do Godard movies or you end up not working at all I am not going to spend my time losing time"

WEREWOLF 1: Delpy & Julie Bowen offer Scott a Bloody Mary & Scott & Delpy explore a werewolf's subway lair "What's a girl feel like when she knows she'll turn into a hairy beast? It's like having her period!"

Delpy studied film directing at New York University prior to her indefinite stay in Hollywood "I recently wrote, directed and edited a documentary for French television titled BLAH, BLAH, BLAH which was basically about—*nothing!* It's people with a lot of emptiness in their lives. I guess I was making fun of L.A people, their stupidity, their misogyny America really is the most misogynistic country I know

"A producer has asked me to write a light comedy feature in an AFTER HOURS-vein about two L A girls Maybe AFTER TWILIGHT? Who knows? I've also been discussing, with Dick Linklater, the possibility of reuniting with Ethan Hawke for a sequel to BEFORE SUNRISE "

Returning to the set, Delpy discusses her next voyage—and drops more stand-up "I may go back to France, I suppose I do miss my friends and family I've been calling my mother every day from the AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN PARIS production office, because I miss her so much As for the rest of the French way of life—*you can keep it* Even the food I'm a vegetarian, I only eat rice and vegetables And I don't like wine. I drink tequila Not that I overindulge in that habit I don't want to resemble Shelley Winters in five years time!" □

Elvira
mistress of the dark

SHE'S GONNA BUMP & GRIND YOU ON HER "THRILL RIDE" . . . AND DISNEY WORLD HAS TAKEN THE VAMP TO ITS BOSOM.

BY LAURA SCHIFF

Easter, 1954 Li'l Cassandra Peterson, two-and-a-half years old, is watching her mother boil Easter eggs at their home in Manhattan, Kansas. Then, *CRASH*, the child accidentally knocks over the kettle of boiling water, scalding 35% of her body with third degree burns She barely survives.

Flash forward to the pre-

L: Cassandra Peterson was denied an Oscar and a sequel, after making her film debut. @ Peterson's daughter, heir to her handle as Halloween icon.

"I think women don't have to be covered up, because—y'know—we don't live in the Middle East, with veils and everything. I think women should be able to show whatever they feel like showing—and whenever they want to."

"Unlike men, you don't see any leading women cast as romantic leads when they mature into their sixties—not even when they mature past age 40. They can play a grandma or mom, but won't work as a sexy vamp type of character."

sent. Over a dozen skin graft surgeries later, Peterson—soured on Easter forever—evolved into the Halloween icon whom she christened as Elvira. Indelibly linked with the season of the witch, our voluptuous vamp has preempted the jack-o-lantern as the holiday's annual mascot.

But it's Peterson's personal story that appears to be an episodic patchwork of Robert Bloch fiction and SIMPSONS Halloween anthology. The only actress to be photographed more than twice as a *Femme Fatales* cover woman, Peterson slips into her "Mistress of the Dark" threads, which spill scres of cleavage but somehow conceal "all the parts of my body that are scarred." While preparing for her shoot, Peterson recounted a career that's been percolating for 16 years—an eternity by Hollywood standards.

But, hey, I have better things to do than rehash our prequels to this latest chapter of Elvira's miniseries. Do your own homework, huh? Past issues of *FF* (1.2, 1.3, 4.4, & 5.7) flashback to a 17-year-old Peterson as the youngest showgirl in Las Vegas history—her date with Elvis Presley, who advised the curvy chorine to pursue a singing career—and the hit part in Federico Fellini's ROMA that convinced her to focus on acting instead.

THRILL to Peterson landing hits in film (jump to clips from CHEECH AND CHONG'S NEXT MOVIE and WORKING GIRLS) and television (jump to clips from HAPPY DAYS, FANTASY ISLAND, CHiPS).

YOU'LL CRY! Upon losing the Ginger Grant role in a revival of the GILLIGAN'S ISLAND sitcom, Peterson nearly hagged the whole humiliating Hollywood scene to pursue a career in advertising sales!

YOU'LL LAUGH! Two weeks before her self-imposed D-day, Peterson approved a gig as horror hostess for KHJ-TV's *Movie Macabre*, giving birth to Elvira in front of thousands of viewers.

SHE'LL BECOME A PART OF YOU...

CASSANDRA PETERSON/ELVIRA

"Lived in Europe long enough to go to beaches with no top on. It's very normal, natural. I'm raising a baby daughter with a healthy attitude. Of course, she thinks of my cleavage as lunch."

T. Peterson as ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK, her alter ego's film debut. A *Camp Vamp*, a novel in *Elvira's Nightmare* series, will be adapted into a movie.

Movie Macabre debuted in September of 1981. Hosting grade-Z horror flicks, a wisecracking Elvira—with the precision of a stealth bomber—slid a surplus of double entendres past the radar of station executives and advertisers. Only eight months later, the schlock jock's celebrity had expanded beyond her regional popularity. Elvira's plug for her station's 3-D broadcast of THE MAD MAGICIAN shot sales of stereographic glasses, manufactured for KHJ's premiere of the '53 movie, to over 2.7 million. All this hoopla earned her a guest appearance on THE TONIGHT SHOW and, later, a syndication deal.

In lieu of pay increases, Peterson incrementally negotiated the property rights to her Elvira character: pretty soon, she owned them outright. It wasn't until 1988, however, that Peterson planted her alter ego into the movie medium via ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK. Co-produced by Peterson's Queen-B Productions and NBC's feature film division, the picture was released domestically by the financially troubled New World Pictures. Unfortunately, the competitive summer market butchered the film's short-range business, but home video proved to be better, with ELVIRA climbing to #12 on *Billboard*'s video rental charts.

Flash forward to Halloween, '97 and the grim realization that an ELVIRA movie sequel has been languishing in "development hell" for nine godforsaken years. "It's such a long complicated nightmare why this Part II movie thing isn't happening," Peterson says with an exasperated sigh. "I went to make a second movie very soon after the first one, and I got a deal with Carolco Pictures, who were doing all the RAMBO movies at the time. I wrote the movie and they bought it and then they went bankrupt. And my movie got stuck in bankruptcy. It was one of those things where you wait and wait and wait, and try to get your project back from them, you know?

"So then I talked to Roger Corman about making the sequel. We talked about it and talked about it over the years. I was always having meetings with him, and yes, *great*, he wanted to do it, and it just kind of never happened. The amount of money was prohibitive for him. Carolco was a company

that was used to making movies for tens of millions of dollars. And Roger Corman's used to making them for a buck fifty. I couldn't get the movie script back from Carolco, and if I was going to go to all the trouble of writing a new movie script from scratch, I would rather raise the money independently than do it with Roger Corman's company—although I love Roger Corman and I think he's wonderful.

"It's a lot more work than I'm prepared to do for no money. I'm not in it just for an ego thing. If I'm not going to make some money out of it, then why do it? I respect Roger Corman, I love what he does, and he gives first-time filmmakers of all types a great break. But I'm not at that point in my life anymore."

(At last! Someone in Hollywood finally has the cojones to come right out and admit, "I'm in this for the money." Kinda makes me all misty-eyed for the good old days of Reaganomics.)

Peterson's road to glory has been recurrently paved with Brillo pads and sand pa-

per Take, for example, an erstwhile television pilot that was produced for CBS Titled ELVIRA, the pilot unified three sorceresses in a small town environment Branding the show as "too sexy" for prime time, the corporate brass shelved the project (this from the network that okayed a surfeit of one-season losers, each ambiguously titled, like THE QUEEN AND I, HANGING IN and BUSTING LOOSE

Peterson says there are no plans to take the sitcom out of mothballs "because it's a CBS property and they own it I can't do anything with it if they don't want to do it And they don't want to do it, so that's the end of it"

Or consider the plagiarism lawsuit that was filed by former actress Maila Nurmi, who hosted her own horror series in the 1950s as "Vampira," and whose trademark, low-cut V-neckline furnished the only two reasons to sit through PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE "In the end, the case was completely thrown out of court," Peterson recalls "Nurmi never

Peterson, as the #1 libertine, resists an ELVIRA sequel ("If I'm not going to make some money out of it, why do it?"). *E.* Sales for her brew were not intoxicating.

even showed up for the deposition So the court said, 'Forget it, goodbye' It was just a lot of hassling me, is basically what it was about making me nutty for a long time"

And then, of course, there's the continuing struggle to snag a network time slot for her time of month "I'm always trying to get a Halloween special sold," Peterson grouses "I have one million ideas and I pitch them every year Halloween's a really difficult time to sell something It happens to be Sweeps Week, the NFL playoffs and—one other horrible thing—the new fall line-up So it's almost impossible to get a Halloween thing on You go in and there's two spots that they have open, and they have 90 million people pitching projects, you know? Halloween just falls at a really bad time for television" *The end result?* "They wind up playing Snoopy for the nine billionth time, because they've paid for it and now it's free"

But, as a merchandising cash cow, Elvira's drawing power is unprecedented. Accolade's "graphic adventure" game, *Elvira*, debuted in 1990 to sterling reviews (*Computer Gaming World* pegged it, "The role playing game of the year") Horror Soft Ltd 's "blood-curdling" renderings earned a cautionary disclaimer on the carton and big bucks from overseas markets Only one year later, Accolade popped a sequel on the shelves "Because of the success of my first game, Accolade wanted to get a second one out quickly," recalls Peterson "And I believe what they did is cut me into an existing game that they had already developed, so they could get something out quickly Because those games take years sometimes to develop, so I think they just wanted to put another one out with my image, even though I was barely in it, to capitalize on the success of the first one It was called *Elvira II The Jaws of Cerberus* Both were the best selling video games Europe, Germany in particular"

Last September, Bally/Midway unveiled Elvira's latest pinball machine, *Scared Stiff* The state-of-the-art game, loaded with hundreds of Elvira sound bytes, is a follow-up to her award-winning 1995 pinball panache, *Elvira and the Party Monsters* But El's touch isn't always Midas Sales of her patented suds, *Night Brew*, have been less than intoxicating This short-lived franchise was developed upon Elvira's retirement as Coors Beer *spooks*person. There were no winners in the resultant shake-up, Pamela Anderson, whose celebrity had been defused by BARB WIRE's limp boxoffice, was hired as Coors' '96 Halloween mascot—though her visibility was limited to print ads Does anyone remember Pam's poses as a shapely sorceress? Me neither Then again, does anyone remember Elvira's endorsement for a competitive brewery?

"Unfortunately, it looks like Night Brew is not going to be happening anymore," Peterson shrugs. "The company

that made it, Beverage International Group, is dissolving. They are, however, trying to take my beer to another company and sell it. It's *possible* it could be out again for Halloween '97 but—at the present time—it's pretty much what you find is left over on the shelves from clearing out the merchandise."

Elvira's '97 memorabilia includes a porcelain model kit by Art Attack (retailing for a mere $250), Playing Mantis' Macabre Mobile matchbox car, another set of trading cards issued by Comic Images and a comic book commemorating Elvira's 50th issue. Did I mention the string of lights, available from Target and K-Mart outlets, each reproduced in El's image? *FASTER, ELVIRA! SELL! SELL!*

Peterson has haggled a sweet deal with Disney World. It seems Elvira will make personal appearances every Friday the 13th through '98. You won't be able to miss her; she'll be the only one sauntering down Main Street, in the thick of the Mouse Parade, exhibiting cleavage (I mean, except for Pleasure Island, Jessica Rabbit has been pretty much banned from the theme park.) As for Halloween engagements, "We're still negotiating with a couple of places," says Peterson. "I can't even talk about it at this point because I'll jinx it. Either of these two places would be fantastic, so I'm looking forward to that. And if one of those doesn't come through, I'll probably be doing a tour around the country, from town to town, at different venues."

ELVIRA/CASSANDRA PETERSON

"Ninety percent of actresses have a real tough time once their looks are gone. But guys still work as leading men into their seventies. An old man is paired up with a 20-year-old girl. Sick!"

But, this year, Elvira's activity exceeded her Halloween allocations. Cruising to amusement parks across the country, she launched *Superstition with Elvira*, an interactive motion-controlled recreational ride. Not unlike *Back to the Future*, Universal theme park's virtual reality romp, *Elvira* earned an award for Europe's Best Thrill Ride. "It's just *amazing*," Peterson gushes. "There's a movie screen in front of you, and it takes place at a very, very haunted, old, rundown amusement park. The ride goes through a graveyard and a haunted mansion, and a jungle where a snake comes out and knocks some of the cars off the track. You just go through one scene after another. It's really a trip, if I do say so myself."

Elvira's long, hot summer agenda was supplemented with the promotion of THRILL RIDE, a documentary billed at Imax theaters. "I have a small part in it. It talks about all kinds of thrill rides, including roller coasters and *Superstition With Elvira*. Can you imagine seeing a roller coaster movie at an Imax theater? Pretty cool."

And lest you think Elvira is shucking the movie biz in favor of hocking tchotchkes on the Home Shopping Network, I'll have you know that the woman currently has three projects in development. The first is the ever-elusive TV special, which will integrate a Halloween legend into its scenario. The second is a feature film "which involves Las Vegas and aliens. And Siegfried & Roy. And that's about all I can tell you." And the third is a film

Laura Schiff, who profiled Peterson/Elvira for her 3rd FF cover, describes the diabolic diva as "commercial, kooky, candid." One of El's film projects "involves Las Vegas and aliens. And Siegfried and Roy. And that's all I can tell you."

adaptation of *Camp Vamp*, the second in Berkley Publishing's series of humor/horror novels entitled *Elvira's Nightmares*. Peterson abridges the plot to "a situation where Elvira gets wrangled into taking a group of six or seven teenage girls on a weekend camping trip. They discover The Beast of Beaver Hill, and they almost get

offed by this monster. But, basically, it's really more of a fun novel, because it's so wacky to have Elvira camping." The book, which Peterson and long-time writing partner John Paragon penned for young adults, premiered in February '97. *Transylvania 90210*, their initial collaboration, was released last year. Book #3, *The Boy Who Cried Werewolf*, is slated for 1998.

Peterson and Paragon also wrote *Bad Dog Andy*, a book completely unrelated to Elvira. "It's a parody of *Good Dog Carl*, by Alexandra Day, about a Rottweiler who takes care of a baby," explains Peterson. "I have a Rottweiler named Bram, after Bram Stoker, and he's the best dog in the world. My partner, John Paragon, has the evilest Dalmatian in the world. We call it a 'damnation.' Dalmatians are a nightmare, they're like hyperactive children. My book, *Bad Dog Andy*, is about a very, very bad Dalmatian. It's an illustrated book for adults, about how difficult it is to raise a dalmatian."

CASSANDRA PETERSON/ELVIRA

"Though plastic surgery is good if something's wrong with you, I hate it when it's used to keep up with 20-year-olds! I don't want to be a lady whose mouth goes from earlobe to earlobe."

T. Peterson ditched Elvira for her ACTING ON IMPULSE cameo w/ Nancy Allen, C. Thomas Howell, Linda Florentino...L. She co-wrote the parody, *Bad Dog Andy*

Her daughter, Sadie, is two-and-a-half years old—Peterson was the same age when she experienced her scalding accident. "Sadie used to think I was two people, but I actually think she knows who I am now," laughs Peterson. "I used to be Mommy Elvira and I was Mommy. Now she sees Elvira and she says, *'That's Mommy!'* So I think she gets it now."

"When she sees you in costume," I ask, "with the cleavage and the vampy poses and everything, do you ever wonder what kind of messages you're giving her about women and sexuality?"

"I actually think it's a good message," replies Peterson. "I think women don't have to be covered up, because we don't live in the Middle East, you know, and wear veils and everything. And a women's cleavage is perfectly normal and natural and I've never thought of it in a bad way, like a non-feminist way. I always think of it as women should be able to show whatever they feel like showing, whenever they want to. I am certainly not exposing myself. I'm showing cleavage, but I'm not running around with my shirt off. I lived in Europe long enough that I got really used to going to the beaches with no top on, and all that stuff. It's very natural and normal, you know? Over here, it's the puritanical, 'Oh my God, there's too much cleavage.' So I think, for Sadie, it's a healthy attitude. Of course, she looks at me and thinks of cleavage as lunch!"

"What kind of advice are you eventually going to impart regarding men and dating," I ask.

Peterson rolls her eyes. "Probably 'Don't do anything I ever did! I've tried it all, believe me, and it doesn't work, so don't do it. Join a convent. Become a lesbian. It's safer."

Insisting her days as Elvira are numbered, Peterson looks forward to tallying more "family time" with her daughter and husband/manager Mark Pierson. "I kept saying I'm going to quit playing Elvira by the time I'm this age or that age, and now I'm past those ages by about five or six years. Now I'm going, 'Well, I'll just go year-to-year and see how I hold up.' I mean, women—actresses in this town—are very lucky to keep working into their 40s. Unless you're a Meryl Streep or a Glenn Close, 90% of working actresses have a real, real, real tough time once their looks are gone.

"There are double standards in every aspect of the world. Guys can still work as leading men into their sixties or early seventies, you know? But you don't see any leading women, romantic leads, in their sixties. Maybe not even their forties. They pair up an old man with a 20-year-old girl. That's the way it is. That's really the sick, sick thing about it. I mean, women can work playing someone's mom or playing someone's grandma, but they're not going to work being the sexy vamp type of character. I really hate the idea of going in and having tons of plastic surgery so I can keep working, you know? It's just unfair and I'd hate to inflict that kind of torture on my body."

"There's a lot of people in this town who think of plastic surgery as basic maintenance, like going to the gym," I tell her.

"I know, and I think plastic surgery is a good thing if something is wrong with you. I've had dozens of surgeries on my burn scars. I don't know where I'd be without plastic surgery. But I hate the fact that when you get old, you have to have plastic surgery to keep up with 20-year-olds! You can't do it. You're not fooling anybody. It's unhealthy. I'm not saying I'd never do it, because I have and I might. But I hate the thought of turning into one of these women whose mouths go from their earlobes to their earlobes! Oh, God! For my job?!"

Well, you don't see the Easter Bunny getting any older, do you? He's probably had more face lifts than Liz Taylor and Cher combined. Nobody said being an icon was easy. □

Peterson bonds w/ Elvira to lock-up a Halloween special: "I'm always trying to get one sold. They wind up playing Snoopy [IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, CHARLIE BROWN] nine billion times 'cause they paid for it and it's free."

SHOOTING STAR

REBIRTH OF AN EX-BOMBSHELL: ALEXANDER KEITH SUITS-UP FOR ACTION.

SHOOTING STAR

REBIRTH OF AN EX-BOMBSHELL: ALEXANDER KEITH SUITS-UP FOR ACTION.

"Wendy Schwarzacher died sometime in early 1997. Alexander Keith was born a few minutes later. I'm determined to find, or invent, something cool for women; maybe the Skipper is a musical lounge in GILLIGAN'S ISLAND?"

PROFILE BY ARI BASS

Most actresses gauge an impending birthday as a harrowing experience: something akin to invasive surgery or a wake. But not so for one Miss Alexander Keith. You see, this year marks only her first birthday. Actually, not even. What I mean to say is Alexander Keith has really only been around for a few months. Allow me to explain.

Sometime around New Year '97, Wendy Dawn Walters *Schwarzacher (FF 5:6)* developed an wholeness to her name

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN DEEN

"Wendy Schumacher died sometime in early 1997. Alexander Keith was born a few minutes later. I'm determined to find, or invent, substantive roles for women: maybe the Skipper in a musical homage to GILLIGAN'S ISLAND!"

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Sometime around New Year '97, *Wendy* Dawn Walters *Schumacher* (*FF* 5/8) developed an intolerance to her name.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAN DEEN

Ditching it, she christened herself with a new and unlikely moniker: *Alexander Keith*. Then she determined a new look was also in order. And God took off His shades and stood back.

When I called to arrange a meeting for Ms. Keith's first interview, she cautioned me, "You may not recognize me. I don't look *anything* like I did in my earlier movies."

"Oh," I replied confidently, "I'm pretty sure I'd know you anywhere."

Well, was I surprised. The woman who greeted me, later that evening at the Kings Road Cafe, bore no resemblance to the sexpot who scorched SCORNED 2 and FUGITIVE RAGE. Dressed in overalls and horn-rimmed specs, Keith's yellow hair was trimmed short and spiky, she could have passed as the Oklahoma-raised offspring of Tank Girl and Buddy Holly. Many actresses pay lip service to it, but Keith was the walking embodiment of anti-stereotype. This was cool.

A model of straightforwardness, Keith swept her fingers through the Pamela Gidley tresses and ex-

L. Keith was loaned one of the writer's suits ("It fit *her* infinitely better than me"). R. Predatory in PROPHET

plained the rationale behind the name change "I wanted a new image The roles I did represented a business move, as well as important experience for me and I'm very grateful I'm not trying to pretend that wasn't me in those other films, but Wendy Schumacher became synonymous with those sexy roles and that's not what I'm all about Changing my name was also symbolic for me as a woman Alexander is obviously a male first name, as well as a powerful name—think Alexander the Great—and people are prone to remember a woman with a man's name.

"When I was going to college, I took a job as a nanny to earn some money for school I was a nanny for two boys, one of whom was named Alexander, and he was just an absolute angel I've never met a child more sweet and pure He really touched me and taught me a lot, and I ended up staying for six years because I loved the family so much When I decided to change my name, I took his name because he meant so much to me His mother is VP of Clinical Programs at Children's Hospital, and she was quite a mentor to me Her maiden name is Keith I took that last name so she would have a namesake as well"

And how did Keith's family react to *the change*? "My mother started calling me Alexander the first day She loved it, but my sisters still call me Wendy"

Keith's new name and appearance are the second phase of her metamorphosis Formerly "an ugly fat girl who couldn't *buy* a date in high school," Keith disciplined herself with martial arts training to slim down, build her self-esteem, and launch an acting career (Born a couple of months early and weighing-in at only four pounds—"She looked like a little chicken," recounts her mother—Keith's always been a fighter) Now, with a career in full swing and her confidence unyielding, she's again adapting herself, chameleon-like, to upgraded goals as well as the ever-changing marketplace

"I wanted a new image. Wendy Schumacher was synonymous with sexy roles. That's not what I'm all about. Changing my name was symbolic as a woman."

Lightening-up the "very dark" PROPHET Keith poses on one of the film's Lacy Street Studio sets with her co-star, Don *The Dragon* Wilson and his girlfriend.

"I woke up one day and felt that I had finally come into my own," Keith says "I could finally think of myself as a woman and not a girl It's something that I suppose men won't understand, and a lot of women probably won't either, but it's something that doesn't just happen because you turn a certain age It's life experience You have to be a strong woman in this business, otherwise you'll get swallowed up, and people will take advantage of you"

During the course of our interviews, she landed a lead role in a film helmed by cult favorite/poverty row auteur Fred Olen Ray, who had previously directed the actress in a shoot-'em-up titled FUGITIVE RAGE The good news PROPHET afforded a strong film debut for Alexander Keith

The Wonder Years

Flashback One bright spring day in Anaheim, California, seven-year-old Wendy returned from school and announced to her mother she wanted to take part in a talent show routinely populated by fifth and sixth graders Deciding to belt out a song, Wendy enlisted her stage-shy mom to accompany her on piano When came the day of the show, she fearlessly stepped past the footlights and faced a microphone stand which had been cranked-down 18" to accommodate her diminutive size Her musical selection It's All Right To Cry *Although, ultimately, years would pass before she truly heeded her muse, it was nevertheless what one would call a defining moment*

Her personality—happy, energetic, though deeply sensitive—had developed early Wendy soon was organizing birthday parties for her twin sisters, five and a half years her junior "She had to do a lot once the twins were born," her mother recalls "She became a caretaker with me immediately I'm sure it's that way in any family with more than one infant, but I always regretted that she didn't have more of a childhood as a result of it"

We're Ready For Your Close-Up, Miss Keith

Per Keith's invitation—as well as the opportunity to visit with my old buddy, Fred Ray—I dropped by the set of PROPHET, at L A 's Lacy Street Production Center For those not acquainted with the finer points of Tinsel Town geography, Lacy Street is located in a relatively seedy, rundown sector of the city, complete with a nearby strip club, animal pound, and lots of fast food of unknown origin Hell is just a word until you buy a hot dog in it.

Keith's co-star in PROPHET is none other than action star/immortal thespian Don "The Dragon" Wilson, fresh from his triumph in sight—count 'em, eight—BLOODFIST movies (to be fair, Part III was adapted from a really good script) At this point, I should probably make a small confession Sitting with Keith in her dressing room, I found myself overwhelmed by one gorgeous, solitary thought and no, it wasn't yours truly riding off into the sunset with Ms. Keith I couldn't resist conjuring the image of someone throwing a pie at Mr Machismo, aka Don "The Dragon" Wilson Or, better yet, spitting on the guy It's a hallsy conceit, because nobody messes with Don "The Dragon" Wilson. Then, suddenly, the gods of script re-

writes smiled upon me Fred Ray retools the climactic scene, which is scheduled for a shoot later in the day, and throws Keith some new lines to learn She asks me to rehearse them with her You betcha! A few hours later, Keith is in front of the cameras she impassionately recites her dialogue, pauses and then—just as I coached her—lets loose with a big chunk of wad that spatters on on the unsuspecting action star Veteran cameraman Gary Graver and ace sound mixer Lee Alexander smile Sometimes I love my job

Kidding aside, PROPHET is pumped by an ingredient that's often derailed by marginally budgeted films in the action market—specifically, a well-conceived, unusually dark script which has hybridized sci-fi and kung-fu mayhem Call it *"BLOODFIST meets THE FURY"* or mayhe *meets SCANNERS"*

"It has an X-FILES kind of take on martial arts films," says Fred Olen Ray "The bottom line of the story is in 1965, the government took six children, with exceptional mental powers, out of orphanages and weaned them, under experimentation, into *remote viewers* When the project didn't work the way they had hoped, they turned the kids back out into foster homes and forgot about them Then, 30 years later, some of them are turning into homicidal maniacs, so the government decides they need to find them all and bring them back in And Don ["The Dragon" Wilson] was among the kids adopted by one of the agency families who grew up to be an agent although he doesn't realize that he's one of them early on"

"When the government can't find these kids, they send Don to L.A. on a bogus mission to locate them, figuring that he can find them because he's like them He teams up with a local agent, Vicky Taylor [Keith], who's supposed to be his transport and back-up What Don doesn't know, however, is that one of the members of the government think-tank [Barbara Steele] doesn't want any of the kids to come back alive, hence, Taylor's mission is to make sure that none of them make it back, and—after he's located the last one—to take Don out as well."

Ray and Wilson were mutually locked "into doing something related to remote viewing Our film is actually less fanciful than the 'real' remote viewers who claim they leave their bodies and fly around the sky Don basically gets premonitions of things that are about to happen to him The visions that he has are sort of dark, disorienting and hotbar-some to him, they're not always helpful"

Keith is slated with her exodus from "bombshell" roles "I like the fact that you never quite know where my character is coming from It was a great acting challenge for me because I was always doing one thing, but feeling something else. Vicky Taylor is a tough CIA agent She doesn't run around in a cut-off top and shorts, she's there to do a job It's a strong role for a woman In the independently produced films, you don't see a lot of serious, non-campy 'action' roles for women"

His eyes twinkling a bit, Ray insists, "What I was trying to do was meet all the criteria of a Don Wilson movie, but give people something to chew on in between the fights I said to Don, 'You know, it's already pre-sold, so why don't we take a chance and go against the formula a little?'"

The Contender, or, "I Don't Want to be First, I Just Want to Last."

A number of forces converged to create the "female action star" void (1) The limited potential for Cynthia Rothrock or Cat Sassoon to portray romantic or dramatically challenging roles (2) Imperial Entertainment folded as independent distributors were rapidly eroding (3) Hollywood's traditional neglect of female action leads.

A couple of years ago, A-Pix Entertainment marketed Wendy Schumacher as a key pretender to action film sovereignty "They wanted to try me out in a action vehicle," she recalls, "and get me away from the sex symbol stuff before I became typecast" A-Pix's bet paid off when the resulting movie, Fred Olen Ray's FUGITIVE RAGE, sold like cool lemonade in a hot Georgia cotton patch

"The female action star/LA FEMME NIKITA-type genre works very well for video," maintains A-Pix's Robert Baruc, who stresses the Schumacher films "have rented really well for us, they've been on the top of the rental charts for weeks at a time" Schumacher's zealous promotion of the product was contributory to the brisk sales of the video product "She's terrific on the road, the distributors she meets take an immedi-

"Through action films, I have an opportunity to put myself on the map. My PROPHET character is a tough CIA agent; she doesn't wear a cut-off top and shorts."

It's cheerleaders vs. alien predators. Debuting in STARHUNTER (1995), Keith supported POSEIDON ADVENTURE vets Stella Stevens and Roddy McDowall.

Keith reunites with Danielle, her little sister, on the PROPHET set: "Dan is my best friend supportive & smart."

ate liking to her. She's so down to earth and she doesn't come across as some stuck-up star. Then these people really get behind her movies and push them and sell them to the retailers."

Unlike most female action leads, Keith is no poseur: she's genuinely skilled in kung-fu tactics. Ironically, PROPHET is heraft of "my hand-to-hand fighting—they left that up to Don. Instead I got to do some stunt driving and fire a folding-stock AK-47 a lot. I felt like a badass!"

Every shoot has its share of problems. It was Fred Ray who, years ago, told me that anyone who wraps a movie—sanity still intact—should get an award. This credo proved axiomatic for PROPHET's production crew, they were booted from an Indian casino location outside San Diego—their contract with the tribe, notwithstanding. Ray refers to the resulting confrontation as "*The Battle of Viejo*. I couldn't believe that. And outside they had the nerve to have a big banner up that read, '*No More Broken Treaties*.' We all had our picture taken standing underneath it, pointing at the sign. We said, 'We have an agreement with you people. We have a deal.' They said, 'This is Indian land, we don't have to honor any deals with you!' I said, 'Really [*laughs*], no kidding.' And they were armed." (A "Special Thanks" list, which drifts into the film's ending credit crawl, includes the following raspberry: "*No Thanks To Viejo Casino*.")

Keith, whom Ray hadn't seen in over a year, wasn't the director's first choice for Vicky Taylor. "I kept saying, 'Who am I going to get that can handle the action and can act?'" shrugs Ray. "Then, on the last day of another picture, the makeup girl comes up to me and says, 'Do you know who called me? Wendy Schumacher.' I said, 'Oh my God, why didn't I think of her?'" Ray admits that Wendy Schumacher's transformation into Alexander Keith "took a little getting used to, especially her new haircut." Nevertheless, Ray and co-producer Andrew Stevens concurred that Keith would be perfect as the assertive agent.

Turning heads at Beverly Hills Hotel Peninsula, Keith wore her "dinner attire" for p.r. pics.

When she was billed as Wendy Schumacher, the actress freelanced sans management; she netted three leading roles via chutzpa, personality and word-of-mouth. But Alexander Keith, determined to grab the brass ring, has formally hired an agent. And the buzz has already started. "I have a great opportunity, through action films, to put myself on the map," says Keith. "I certainly don't want to do just action roles, but action does sell and we don't have a lot of female action heroes who are sexy and can carry those films believably. I want to show that I can do that and also get the opportunity to do other kinds of work. While I'm doing independent films, if it's between doing films that show skin and doing action films, I'll take the action."

Fred Ray commends his star's approach: "I thought it was good for her to do a picture with Don ["The Dragon"] Wilson. If she wants to break into action, there's no better role than in a film with production value with a character of some substance. I think her fans will really like the picture and like what she does in it."

Postscript: Upon viewing the final cut of PROPHET, producers Andrew Stevens and Ashok Amritra hired Alexander Keith to star opposite Michael Dudikoff in COUNTER MEASURES, the nautical thriller has prompted Keith's second reunion with director Fred Olen Ray. The plot involves an ex-Navy SEAL (Dudikoff) and an undercover Naval Intelligence officer (Keith) trying to wrest a Russian submarine—and its advanced nuclear warheads—from a nutcase who's intent on launching a world war to kickstart a new Soviet empire. "Ostensibly, Dudikoff and I are aboard a sub as medics," says Keith, "but my character is actually there to study the missile system. Then all hell breaks loose—chases, gunfire, crawling through ducts—and we have to save the day." □

BATGIRL

LOCKING OUT THE "LOLITA" IMAGE, ALICIA SILVERSTONE ADMITS TO CARRYING "EXCESS BAGGAGE."

BY FREDERICK C. SZEBIN

"Chicks like you give women a bad name."
Batgirl to Poison Ivy.

Summer's over. Temperatures were hot as hell. The season's crop of sci-fi flicks were noisy, flashy – all about men in black, black machismo from hell, dinosaurs, giant cockroaches, space spooks. But, excluding CONTACT, the only substantive characters for women were linked to sidekicks. The crowd-pleaser of this phylum was Alicia Silverstone. Yeah, BATMAN & ROBIN bottomed out after collecting $105 million (the film's budget: $110 million), but, critical barbs notwithstanding, Silverstone was the only name that drew applause, at L.A. screenings, during the film's closing credit crawl.

The San Francisco-born actress tallied notoriety as a result of her lethal Lolita role in THE CRUSH (1992). The film earned lousy reviews, but MTV thought Silverstone was hot enough to qualify for two movie awards. Aerosmith also ignored the reviews and cast the ingenue in a few of their videos, including CRAZY, which paired Silverstone with Liv Tyler, daughter of the

BATMAN & ROBIN: Silverstone, cast as Batgirl (l), turned to jokester Chris O'Donnell (facing) for continuity tips. & Her "poor little rich girl" is very far from clueless in EXCESS BAGGAGE.

George Clooney and Chris O'Donnell, as BATMAN & ROBIN, pose with sidekick Silverstone. "Both of them were making jokes all the time. My friends referred to Batgirl as Bathaby but she's not a woman and she's not a baby. She's a girl hero."

band's lead singer. She was cast in five films that were released in 1995: HIDEAWAY, a supernatural thriller, barely survived its opening weekend. As THE BABYSITTER, Silverstone effortlessly tweak- ed the libidos of everyone from her prepubescent charge to the kid's pop, a middle-aged lothario, a softcore loop sans skin, this turkey couldn't find a distributor until Silverstone rose above her marginal celebrity as direct-to-video diva. Regarding her other films TRUE CRIME couldn't get arrested and the best that could be said of LE NOUVEAU MONDE is—hmmm—it's French and there were *hour-long lunch* breaks (foreshadowing here). But CLUELESS, written and directed by Amy Heckerling, lifted Silverstone out of the Lolita league, and furnished her with a character that appealed to the film's female core age group.

While promoting Heckerling's film in Japan, Silverstone was beckoned by director Joel Schumacher to play a distaff side of the Dark Knight. "I actually had no idea that there was a Batgirl," she admits. "I watched the TV series and was really into the Catwoman character, the Joker and the Riddler. But I didn't know of Batgirl at all. I was really excited about doing the film when I heard it was based on a comic book character. Accepting the role was such an easy decision to make. BATMAN & ROBIN ...it sounded fun, like a game."

Silverstone's casting was kicked-off with a media brouhaha about her modest weight gain. Sure, she put on a couple of pounds but the trades deceptively rendered her into Jabba the Hutt. A few workouts later, Silverstone's sleek physique looked chic in constrictive spandex. "We were all supposed to be physically fit because of the fact that you're going to wear this heavy, heavy costume," she recounts. "We'd need to be able to run around, and have good endurance, so that you can manage the whole day with this suit on. I spent so much time complaining in that costume that I didn't see any payoff." (Some saw a chronic case of reverse sexism. "How come Batman and Robin's rubber suits have nipples, and Batgirl's doesn't?" queried the *San Francisco Examiner*'s Barbara Shulgasser.)

"As far as the stunts go," continues Silverstone, "we all did the same amount of work. There were times when they didn't bring in the stunt person when you wish they would. That happened a lot. But, basically, I was able to use my ballet training in the fighting scenes. then I was in pain the next day because I did it out of an adrenaline rush. Right there and then, you think you're Superwoman—or Batgirl—and that you can do whatever you want to do, like kick really high. Then 24 hours later, I could hardly move my leg!"

Batman comics conceptualized Batgirl as the alter ego of "shy" Barbara Gordon, daughter of Gotham's crimebustin' police chief, James Gordon. Akiva Goldsman's screenplay transplanted the superheroine's alternate identity into Barbara Wilson, a motorcycle addict who's the niece of manservant Alfred. Returning from England, Wilson—sans British accent—arrives at Wayne Manor to greet her Uncle Alfred, whose paternal allegiance to his employers has been taken for granted. Silverstone

"Boys have lots of heroes: G.I. Joe, Superman. But little girls don't have that. There should be equal opportunity. Batgirl's the opportunity."

BATMAN & ROBIN: Dick Grayson (O'Donnell) and Bruce Wayne (Clooney) reunite Barbara Wilson (Silverstone) with Uncle Alfred (horror vet Michael *"Kongo, put me down"* Gough)

She juiced MTV as jailbait in THE CRUSH, Silverstone even survived the reviews (*On Screen* critic David Giammarco pegged her as "the Sophia Coppola of the '90's."

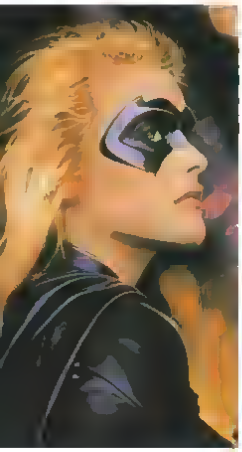
prefers her introductory, compassionate scenes as Wilson over Batgirl's bravado. "I'm used to doing things where I can really sink my teeth into a character... and feel like I'm creating something with inner turmoil. That's what drives me through the job. It's what makes it fun to get up and go to work. When you don't have that kind of character, because it's a comic book, it becomes more like play. My concentration level was very different because I wasn't focused on a character, I was focused on going to work and having fun."

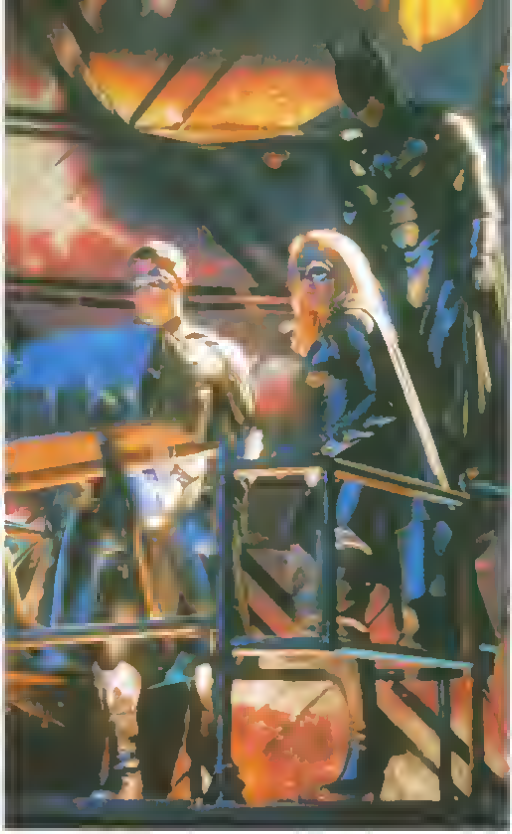
But without linear continuity, Silverstone sometime had to speculate on her character's motives: *"Which character had just been slain?"... "Whom am I reading my lines to?"*... When she inquired about her character's motivation for embroiling in a catfight with Poison Ivy, "I was just told to fight her. I would constantly ask Chris O'Donnell, all the time, *'What the hell's going on?'* I never had any idea because it's hard for me to understand 'action.' I'm used to really dissecting a set where everybody's very happy, and everyone around you is so comfortable. It's great when you can look behind the camera, or walk anywhere on the set, and see that everyone seems to be having a good time and enjoys what they're doing.

"George [Batman] and Chris [Robin] were making jokes *all* the time. I can be a little too serious and shy sometimes, but I liked and felt comfortable with these people. When I did feel comfortable enough to be friendly, it was nice to just talk to anybody because it makes you feel better. It makes it fun to be working there, better than being uncomfortable and feeling like everybody is dying and nobody is eating good. The catering company was the best in the world—except for maybe working in France with the hour-long lunch and the wine, the brie and all that. On BATMAN & ROBIN the food was really good—that

makes a difference, too"

B-filmmakers have afforded themselves experimentation with action heroines—Kathy Long, Diana Pang, Cynthia Rothrock—some of whom crossed into A-territory (Pamela Grier, Michelle Khan/Yeoh). But, exempting Sigourney Weaver and Lucy Lawless, even Hollywood's penchant for extravagance just can't buy a mainstream female action icon. Tinseltown prefers a safety net (males+action=profits). Ditching yesteryear's nymph for "ninja-style crusader," Silverstone was insistent on honing a role model for her female fans. "Little boys have got so many heroes. They have G.I. Joe, Superman, whoever. But I don't think little girls have that. Batgirl's not a woman, and she's not a baby. My friends call her 'Bathaby' (*laughs*). She's younger and it makes her more accessible to the kids. It's really important that young people, that girls, have a girl hero. And I'm sure guys like Batgirl, too. It's definitely a step in the right direction, as far as balancing things out is concerned, and boys not stereotyping girls. There should be an equal opportunity Batgirl offers that opportunity."





BATMAN & ROBIN: The Dynamic Trio fell Arnold Schwarzenegger's Mr. Freeze ("You're not sending me to the cooler!"). L. Silverstone earned equal time on the ads & merchandising.

Nevertheless, Silverstone prefers her EXCESS BAGGAGE, which she wrapped only a few weeks ago. No chaste heroine this time around. No hubble-exhaling himbo, either. Grey area, here. Silverstone plays Emily T. Hope, who's so desperate for her father's attention that she resorts to a series of reckless stunts, ultimately faking her own abduction. Everything is okaleedokaleedo until Hope's scheme to be "discovered" in the trunk of her BMW backfires when the vehicle is stolen by professional car thief Vincent Roche. Initially adversarial, the couple bond to outrun not only the cops, but Hope's "Uncle Ray", an ex-CIA assassin employed by her father to rescue his daughter.

EXCESS BAGGAGE is the first of Silverstone's films to be organized by her own banner, First Kiss Productions. She's assembled a first rate cast: Benicio Del Toro as Vincent, Jack Thompson as Emily's neglectful father and Christopher Walken as Uncle Ray. Director Marco Brambilla (DEMOLITION MAN) shot the film "between May-July, in and around Vancouver, British Columbia with additional footage in Victoria, B.C."

Though CLUELESS did fuel her career, Silverstone is quick to point out "the significant difference" between that film's shopaholic Cher and the much darker Emily. "Vincent and Emily are thrown into a situation neither of them wants to be in," the actress reaffirms. "She's got her agenda, he's got his and those agendas are in complete conflict with each other. The second she realizes he's not a threat, that he's not going to hurt her, she begins to realize that she can toy with him and manipulate him into getting what she wants. Then they kind of become partners in crime.

"There's more to this script and character than just a poor little rich girl getting anything she wants by merely stomping her feet. When I first read the script, I was really taken with the fact that this girl would set up her own kidnapping. It was clear to me that these two people, this father and daughter, are never, ever going to be okay and that Emily has got to understand and accept that.

"Emily is only asking for the most innocent, most precious thing you could ever ask for—the love of your father. But, somehow, it is the most common thing to be neglected and how this girl goes about getting attention is completely irrational and very immature. By the end of the movie, Emily realizes that she must accept her father for who he is and will never be able to change him. She finds strength and love inside herself, and is even able to share it with someone else."

First Kiss Productions, a partnership between Silverstone and Carolyn Keasler, is currently developing projects for the actress that are polar opposites of her former jailbait roles. "I loved producing EXCESS BAGGAGE," says Silverstone. "It

"I'd ask Chris O'Donnell 'What the hell was going on' all the time. I never had an idea because it's hard for me to understand 'action.'"

was a tremendous responsibility that took constant communication, a lot of patience and every ounce of my blood..."

She talks about balancing the film's budget, her contributory participation with the casting, and fleshing out a character who's far from clueless. There's a not-so-subliminal message in her conversation. Alicia Silverstone is all grown-up.

"I was really nervous about casting the part of Vincent," she recalls. "To me, the movie depended on Vincent and, if I didn't find the right actor, I wasn't going to do the film. I can say right now that, without Benicio, I couldn't do this movie. I saw him in THE USUAL SUSPECTS, and I couldn't stop laughing. Sitting down with him, I knew that he would challenge me. And the most important thing for me was to be challenged." □

EXCESS BAGGAGE. Silverstone not only stars as dysfunctional Emily Hope (t) but funded the project via her First Kiss production unit. *Below l:* Pondering the consequences of her mock abduction ("She's only asking for the love of her dad.") *Below r:* W / Benicio Del Toro ("Couldn't stop laughing at him in USUAL SUSPECTS")

STRIP SEARCH

S&M, SMOKE & STRIPPERS: PAM GRIER IN A "WIZARD OF OZ WITH SEX" ODYSSEY.

BY IAN JOHNSTON

The standard rogue cop shoot-em-up is sensuously slanted in STRIP SEARCH, which director Rod Hewitt likens to a certain fairy tale odyssey. The low budget film, shot over 21 nights in Montreal, stars Michael Pare (STREETS OF FIRE) as vice cop Robbie Durrell.

Surviving a Chinatown shootout, Durrell is hired by a wealthy, young widow

named Sela (Caroline Neron) who recruits the cop to locate Billy, her missing stepdaughter.

Billy, heir to a fortune, has gravitated to Montreal's sleazier quarters. Fully absorbed into the bacchanalian lifestyle, her chosen profession is striptease. But two questions linger: Canada is inundated with "man's clubs" —but which one has engaged Billy's services? And why doesn't Billy want to be found?

STRIP SEARCH: T: Caroline Neron as Sela, rich widow & heir to a dark agenda. L: Vice cop Robbie (Michael Pare) and his corrupt partner, Janette (Pam Grier).

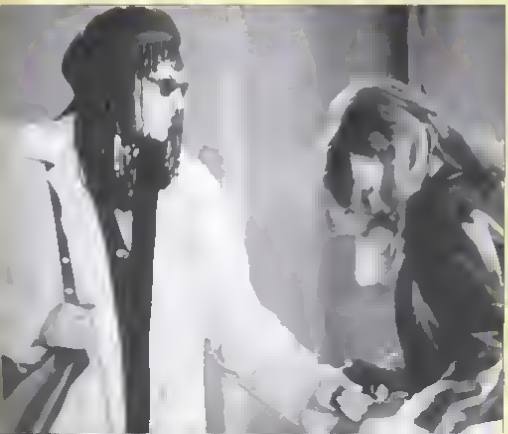
"The way we designed the picture was to have this episodic 'Wizard of Oz with sex' premise," says Hewitt, a screenwriter/director best known for helming VERNE MILLER (1988), a gangster melodrama starring Scott Glenn. "Pare's character goes through these little adventures, meeting new people along the way and getting manipulated at every turn. I think STRIP SEARCH is a wild and interesting ride. Audiences won't be disappointed with its perversity level. It's strange and very funny."

The movie is buoyed by a substantive supporting cast, including Pam Grier (COFFY, ESCAPE FROM L.A.) as Pare's corrupt partner, and Maury Chaykin (DANCES WITH WOLVES) as a portly intellect who spouts poetry and indulges his addiction to strip joints.

"I got very lucky with the cast," says Hewitt. "Maury is very, very funny, and having Pam Grier on board was special. The woman in this movie are *all* very beautiful."

Hewitt is particularly high on 23-year-old Caroline Neron, whom he describes as "looking like Grace Kelly—and she can act. Caroline has the best skin tone of any actress I've ever shot except for maybe Pam, who

7 Ferreting out an elusive stripper, Grier flashes her trademark greeting. Determined to double-cross a partner, Grier negotiates with Caroline Neron (b)



HEIDI VON PALLESKE

"If the part was a Russian lesbian terrorist, I was sure to get it. I was playing lots of European bad guys. The end of the Cold War was bad for my career: I was Heidi Von Accent for a while."

is great across the board. STRIP SEARCH is really a female picture, with a number of great female characters who kick the crap out of the men. Just like real life. Someone came up to Pare in a restaurant and asked if he played the hero in this film. And he said, 'No, I play the fool.'

Tallying five years of dramatic experience, Neron's resume includes a handful of French films and TV roles. STRIP SEARCH qualifies as her debut in an English language film. "It was very hard for me because it was my first lead part," says the Montreal native, "and it was shot mostly at night in a short period of time.

"As for the English, it was no problem. I have more of an accent when I'm talking to people than making a movie. I had a language coach and, when you practice the script, you get rid of most of it. Besides, we don't know really where my character is from. We just know she has an accent."

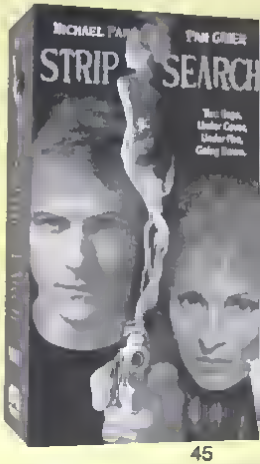
Neron pegs the manipulative, gun-toting Sels as "very complex, with a lot of colors. She only has interest in people if she thinks she can use them. In the case of Robbie, whom Michael Pare plays, she has fallen in love with him. But she won't stay with him."

Beyond the language barrier, Neron had some difficulty acclimating herself to firearms, even though the pyrotechnics were limited to props. "There was a scene where I had to hold a gun in the mouth of Lucie [Laurier]. Oh my God, we were shaking! I was afraid I'd hurt her. It was really weird to hold a gun if you haven't done it before."

Hewitt admits that she was in awe of screen veteran Pam Grier (*FF* 5.2). "I've been aware of her work for years. So working with Pam was just as exciting as a lot of the big name actresses. On-screen, she has something indescribable. Her performance appears very different and stylized on set. But, as you cut the film together in the editing room, she just gets better."

The screenplay's nocturnal milieu, which had been centralized in Montreal's "grindhouse" environment, challenged Hewitt to simulate a habitat for smoke n' strippers. "We used a Masonic temple, but the Masons were great about it. Great guys. Le Cathedral is this real bizarre place with all these naked nuns dancing up by the ceiling—and bishops, dressed in red, walking around. The joke is now everyone is going to make their strip clubs look like ours."

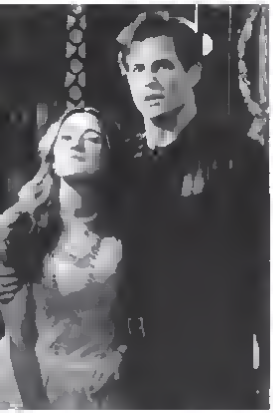
Pare & Grier are draws for the Canadian direct-to-video thriller. "The film was sold world-over in advance."



Nonatheless, Hewitt denies he made an exploitation movie. He insists that his film's more commercial elements (diarehements, S&M, violence) are marginally dispersed in a tableau "that's really a character study. Most of what we have is background nudity, though we do have a lot of beautiful woman and perverse situations."

Sheila (Heidi Von Palleske) camouflages her personal perversity behind a shield of beauty. Abetted by her "twin" partner (Claudio Besso) at the Wild, Wild Girls club, the dominatrix is paid by male masochists for floggings. "If this were *Alice In Wonderland*, I'd be the March Hare," says Toronto based Von Palleske (6'5), who tangoed with twins (both played by Jeremy Irons) in David Cronenberg's DEAD RINGERS.

"My character keeps popping up all through the movie, sending Michael Pare on these wild goose chases. He's looking for this woman's stepdaughter, and I'm always saying she's here or there. He's always getting lost because I'm having fun sending him to the wrong places."



Eschewing cliched S&M gear, Von Palleske deferred to a facade of "classic movie glam. The typical bondage clothes are so on-the-nose. It's what you expect. So we came up with whipping twins in this sort of Marlene Dietrich costume. There's the G-string and hose, but with men's tails. It's sort of a cross between the traditional Playboy Bunny and the Dietrich songstress. It's far sexier than the expected route."

HEIDI VON PALLESKE

"I got my head around nudity very early on. If you're an attractive woman in the industry, you have *got* to do nudity. If I can play a character who kills, I can play one who makes love."

↑: Resisting a lifestyle as a sophisticate, Billy (Lucie Laurier) prefers stripteasing in seedy clubs. ⇄: Sela (Neron) and her soon-to-be-missing stepdaughter ↓. The cop rescues Billy from a burlesque bloodbath

STRIP SEARCH reunited Von Palleske with Pare, both actors previously teamed-up for THE CUSP, a sci-fi film shot in Toronto. The youthful beauty has also experienced deja vu playing twins, a recurrence launched in the likes of DOUBLE TAKE and a TV movie, LOVE AND BETRAYAL: THE MIA FARROW STORY (1994). "I did a film where my husband was a twin, and one where I had twin daughters," recounts Van Palleske. "Every time I hear of a movie with the word 'twin' or 'double' in the title, I seem to get it. Maybe it's because my mom and aunt were twins. It's weird."

Furthermore, the actress is professionally frustrated with the perpetuation of "bad girl" roles. "I had this ongoing joke for a while—if the part was a Russian lesbian terrorist, then I was sure to get it. It seemed like I was playing a lot of Eastern European bad guys. The end of the Cold War was really bad for my career. I was Heidi Von Accent for awhile [*laughs*].

"Playing so many bad guys bothered me. Everyone says it's more fun and it is—for awhile. But after you've played them a lot, it's not fun anymore."

Von Palleske notes that she was initially skeptical about her role in STRIP SEARCH, after all, it afforded her less screen time than most of her recent projects. "It just sounded like a lot of other roles I'd played. I thought I could just fake it in. But when I started doing it, I actually got into it—and played it with a lot more humor."

The actress discusses, with subdued impartiality, scenes that she's required to

perform sans wardrobe "I got my head around nudity very early on," shrugs Von Palleske. "If you're an attractive woman in the industry, you've *got* to do it Any time I've played a lead, there's been a love scene But if you approach it as part of the film, there's no problem If I can play a character that kills someone, I can play one that makes love It's very important for an actress to take a good, hard look at the script and see if the nudity serves the story"

Examining an abridged chronicle of her nudity in *The Bare Facts*, a reference guide that links celebrities with scenes they performed in the raw, Von Palleske erupts in laughter "Can you believe the research that went into that book? There I am, though they missed a few of my appearances And they'll have a few more entries in the next edition"

It's incumbent upon a filmmaker to shoot scenes of sex n' violence for a movie it's the grist that sells a cost constrictive film Hewitt, however, claims that the initial script draft of STRIP SEARCH was somehow bereft of money shots "This movie was sold around the world—in advance—just on the power of Michael Pare's name He's a huge, international star But when we finished the deal with the distributors, they realized there was no nudity and very little violence So we added a number of new scenes, including an opening action scene I'm quite proud of"

That "opening" grabber is a cheat Appearing to be schmoozing a hooker for a one-night stand, Pare is actually concealing guns under her skirt The couple enter one of Chinatown's nightclubs to settle a score with a local mobster

"It's sort of that John Woo type opening, though I think it's more Peckinpah It's very exciting, wild and exotic at the same time We tried to keep the movie very stylized from the beginning to end" □

T: Heidi Von Palleske and her pseudo twin (Claudia Besse) as entrepreneurs who service male sadomasochists ("If this were *Alice in Wonderland*, I'd be the March Hare," says Von Palleske) B: The Wild Wild Girls Club, a Montreal location.

NANCY ALLEN

"CARRIE," "DRESSED TO KILL," "ROBOCOP": THE FANTASY CINEMA'S #1 FEMME.

BY LAURA SCHIFF

Okay, so maybe she's got two left feet Okay, so Performing Arts High School told her to boogie-on out of their dance department—*pronto!* Hey, nobody's perfect But whatever Nancy Allen lacks in fancy footwork, she compensates with fortitude Recognizing that her true talent lay in acting, she soon made one giant jeté to the silver screen, proving that you can't keep a good woman down

Allen cast as Rachel Rose, sustains her sci-fi legacy with "Valerie 23" an episode of OUTER LIMITS (3/31/96)

Allen's knack for turning negatives into positives has served her well throughout her life Take CARRIE, the quintessential prom-from-hell horror flick based on Stephen King's novel when Allen signed on to play catty Chris Hargensen, opposite Sissy Spacek's mousy Carrie White, she wasn't prepared for the public's outrage at her character's viciousness "Chris is my favorite character!" Allen says "She's mean and horrible and self-centered. To me, she is that side that every teenager has, which is the ultimate temper tantrum every time she doesn't get what she wants. And I think I identified with her in some way—specifically, I think there's that side that, obviously, one represses because it's really not all that charming! As a teenager, I can remember being not so nice, more so within my family than with my friends

"But it's always fun for me to play someone who's a little bit darker than someone who's sweeter Plus, it was funny John [Travolta] and I felt what we were doing was hysterical, because everyone was always laughing at us So I was horrified when I saw how much everybody hated me after that movie People would come up to me on the street and say, *'I hate you You were mean You were horrible.'*" A pep talk with the film's director, Brian DePalma, enlightened Allen that her public vilification was a credit to her dramatic aptitude

Portrait of evil: Allen, as Chris, engineers a prank that will humiliate CARRIE.

Allen and Paul LeMat in STRANGE INVADERS ('83) Critics lauded the sci-fi sleeper a "gorgeously fluent detailing in performance, design and direction."

T: Allen & John Travolta are toast after bumping into the tormented CARRIE (Sissy Spacek) "Shooting was difficult, especially the shower scene" (below)

A relative ingenue at the time, Allen learned the ropes from Hollywood vets DePalma and Spacek. She was especially intrigued with the climactic scene, where a telekinetic Carrie puts a damper on prom pomp by wiping out her senior class "That sequence was supposed to be about four days or a week long But it went on for three weeks, and it was very detailed Brian had every shot story-boarded Actually, a lot of people got hurt during that PJ Soles, who played Norma Watson, ended up with a punctured ear drum And somebody else hurt their ribs from getting thrown around so much It could be pretty tense during that time But everybody came, even on the days when they didn't work, just to watch to learn. I personally was there *all* the time I wanted to learn everything You could just feel that there was something special about this film And everyone was so good that I didn't want to miss a second Sissy Spacek, who was very nice to me, 'removed' herself in a certain way—but I think it was partly because she was in her character so much I know that if it were me, it would have been very difficult to do a lot of socializing and then withdraw like that It's quite extraordinary to watch her work Her choices were very interesting She had a lot of Biblical pictures of people being stoned and things like that, which I think she used Her process, to me, was fascinating"

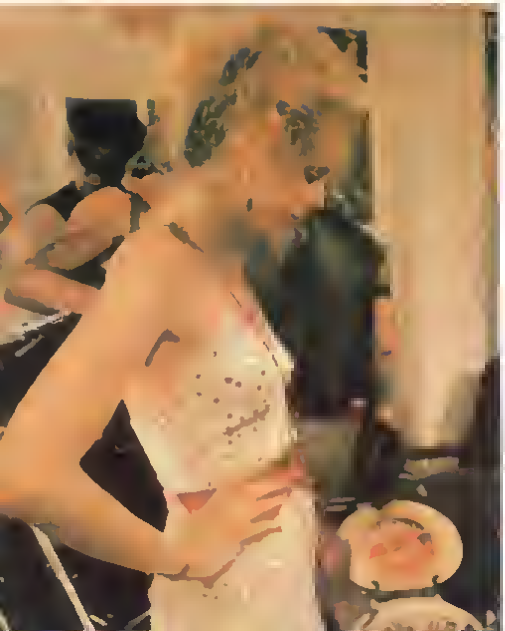
POLTERGEIST 3: Allen & Nathan Davis were bedeviled by critics. *Washington Post* "Allen looks as if she hopes her parents won't find out about this one."

Allen admits that she and Brian DePalma did not hit it off right away "In fact, I didn't really think he liked me very much," she relates "He was so unfriendly—although I was told he was much friendlier to me than he was to most people! He could have fooled me But I must say, I was certainly very much in awe of him as a director I thought he was incredibly talented and inspired in what he was doing His choices to me were very perverse and funny."

So how does a plucky gal circumvent a face-off with gruff Mr Cult Icon? She married him, of course!

"I guess there was an attraction there, on some level," Allen smiles "It was really a few month after CARRIE that we went out for the first time Actually, it was John

Fueled by a very profitable controversy, DRESSED TO KILL grossed nearly $32 million back in 1980. Allen, directed by then-husband Brian DePalma, was cast as hooker/murder suspect Liz Blake. To mollify the MPAA, and avoid an X-rating, DePalma had to trim three sequences and replace some of Allen's racier dialogue



Travolta who said to me towards the end of filming, 'You know, I think he likes you.' And I said, 'Oh, you're crazy. He doesn't like me at all.'" Allen and DePalma were wed, three years later, in 1979. "When we first got married, Brian would get up really early, like three or four in the morning, and he'd write for a few hours. I'd sit down to breakfast and have coffee with him, and he'd read the script that he was working on to me. I couldn't wait every day for the next installment! And when he finished it, I said, 'I just think it's incredible. I think it's so great.' And he said, 'Well, I'm glad you like it, because I've written this part for *you*.'"

The script, DRESSED TO KILL—not to mention Allen's character, a hooker

L: Allen in HOME MOVIES, which director DePalma produced for $400,000. R: Reunited w/ John Travolta in BLOW OUT, initially titled PERSONAL EFFECTS

and murder suspect named Liz Blake—provoked feminist protest and the resultant big boxoffice gross. "Everyone talks about the nudity in that movie," sighs Allen, who performed a PSYCHO-influenced shower scene, just one sample of DePalma's glut of Hitchcock homage. "In fact, for me, the nudity of the shower scene was almost easier, because you were so vulnerable, and people are very sensitive to that on the set. Brian is the one who had difficulty when I was in the shower scene. At one point, he said, 'What am I doing with my wife running around naked in front of all these people?!' He was really flipping out!"

More challenging for Allen was a scene which obligated her to strip down to flimsy bra and panties while recounting an erotic fantasy to a psychiatrist [Michael Caine]: "When I put the black lingerie on, that's when you get into trouble. I don't know what it is, but men behave very badly. It brings out the eighth grader in them, looking at *Playboy* magazine or something. So I felt a little more uncomfortable in that scene, telling this erotic, frightening nightmare—and trying to be very commanding and seductive, with Michael Caine—than I did in the shower."

But Allen's discomfort was marginal compared to the introductory scene in her subsequent collaboration with DePalma, BLOW OUT: she's trapped inside a car that's jumped a guard rail and plummeted head-first into a lake. "That scene was probably, out of everything I've ever done, the most horrible thing I've ever had to do," she recalls, shuddering at the memory. "I used to be severely claustrophobic and Brian knew that. We shot that out here in Burbank Studios. The car was submerged in this tank.

"Brian said to the special effects people, 'Now, she really has to know that she can get out of there, so create an atmosphere and let her see that she can feel very safe.'

"CARRIE's prom sequence was supposed to be shot between 4-7 days. But it went on for 3 weeks, and it was very detailed. Actually, lots of people got hurt doing it."

BLOW OUT: Allen, again cast as a call girl, with Travolta & John Lithgow. Allen's climactic death scene (her murderer is Lithgow) imperiled the profits (produced for $12 million, film grossed $6 million). With director DePalma.

Now, to someone who's not claustrophobic—as long as there's a way out—they don't care. When I got there, I just thought that the car was going to be submerged and there would be a hole cut out, and I'd go in and out of it. Well, there was. However, there was also a long tube. I mean it was like this." She holds up her hands to mime a tube approximately two feet in diameter. "So you sort of had to slither down into it and slither up out of it. And I just looked at that and said, 'How am I ever going to get in there?' And Brian kept saying, 'You don't have to do it. We'll get a double in.' And I said, *'No!'* I'm so willful in that way, and I so wanted to please him and not be a problem. I got in there and it was very terrifying because—literally!—the car just starts filling up with water very fast. And there was a man in the front seat who had the tank with the breathing apparatus, the scuba gear, but you're not thinking about that. So when you see me fighting to get out of there, you know that I'm *really* freaking out. And I did kind

of flip-out a little bit after that. Brian wouldn't let me get back in the car, so the other shots of seeing the window being broken and the body being taken out are not me. I just couldn't do it. It was too much."

About this time, things were starting to get equally tense at home. The long, intense hours on the set chipped-away at the DePalmas' union. "I think there

DRESSED TO KILL. One year after the film s debut, NBC purchased TV rights for $6.5 million. Dialogue in Allen s seduction scene (*t&b*) was severely cut (*sample* "I like to turn men on I must be doing a good job cause they pay me a lot")

was a tremendous pressure that I didn't perceive at the time," Allen admits "I think I was very naive in terms of how difficult that was for both of us, for the marriage I mean, you're so tired when you're finished shooting at the end of the day, you just go home and collapse It's a strain because, normally, one or the other would go to their spouse and say, 'I'm so tired I need this, I need that' You nurse them and you encourage them, and you cuddle them and all of that So who do you go to when both people are just broken at the end of the day? A director's job is horrible, I think There's never a minute when you're not needed or wanted or pulled at in some way

"And I think our age difference, too I mean, for me, making movies was much more exciting because it was newer For him, it was a job at that point "

The couple separated almost a year after wrapping

"DePalma is the one who had difficulty with my shower scene in DRESSED TO KILL. 'What am I doing with my wife running nude in front of all these people?'"

BLOW OUT and divorced—amid much gossip and speculation—two years later. Rumors circulated that Allen was washed-up, with BLOW OUT a commercial flop and DePalma out of the picture. "Who would write her next meal ticket?" snickered the scandal sheets. Never mind Allen's laudatory work without DePalma, including her comedic performance in I WANNA HOLD YOUR HAND. Back when SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE was actually considered hip, one of the show's blackout sketches summarized Hollywood's cynicism: the audio track for THE CLAMS, a mock trailer spoofing THE BIRDS and DePalma's obsession with Hitchcock, opened with, *"Every couple of years, Brian DePalma picks the bones of some great dead director and gives his wife a job..."*

"I wasn't really thinking about that at the time," Allen remembers. "I was a woman being divorced from my husband. That's what was hard. It was more about losing the marriage than the work. It's hard enough to go through a divorce without being public about it. I think the divorce took an emotional toll on me. The grieving. Not processing it properly. I think it affected my career, simply because I started to withdraw so much."

Cast in the very underrated STRANGE INVADERS ('83) and the too predictable PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT ('84), she co-hosted TERROR IN THE AISLES and energized listless mainstreamers like THE BUDDY SYSTEM and NOT FOR PUBLICATION. But it wasn't until 1987 that Allen approved a plum role in a blockbuster. "I was passionate about doing ROBOCOP. I wanted to work with Paul Verhoeven. I'd seen SOLDIER OF ORANGE, which I thought was amazing. I didn't know ROBOCOP would be such a huge hit. I thought that it was so unusual, that it would absolutely find an audience, but I couldn't imagine it being such a mainstream success because it was so strange." She reprised her role as Anne Lewis in two sequels, each burdened with dwindling grosses. Then Allen's career careened to a halt.

"I think that ROBOCOP was such a change in my image—things like that really throw people," shrugs Allen. "I'd always had more of a sexy image. I got involved with a manager, and I left CAA. I did find myself sort of wandering a little bit, without much direction. I do look back and think that I would have made a different decision, given the opportunity to go back and change it around now. It was not a wise business decision at all. But I've done a lot of work since then. Some good work, some interesting things for me, but nothing that's been mainstream, really, at all."

Earlier this year, Allen was cast in a couple of films, including the direct-to-video AGAINST THE LAW. "I play an on-camera television reporter named Maggie Hewitt, who's taken hostage by a psychotic guy [Richard

L. With Richard Dreyfuss in a romantic comedy, THE BUDDY SYSTEM (1984). The name of Allen's character? *Carrie*. R. During the same year, Allen was cast as Allison, opposite Michael Pare, in the sci-fi thriller THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT. A moderate success, the film spawned a sequel—produced 9 years later!

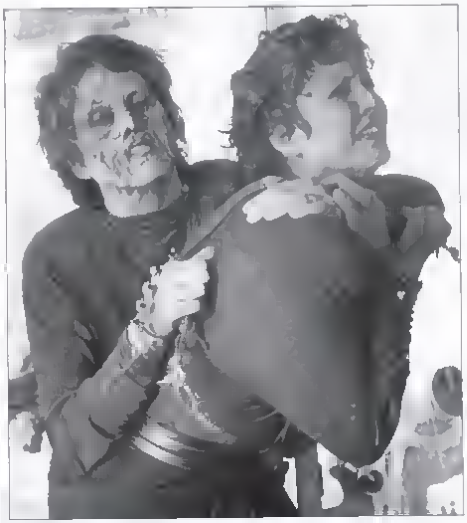
Grieco] who thinks he's Billy the Kid," says Allen. "He approaches me and wants me to do the story of his life and cover this big showdown. Unfortunately, Maggie's not a character that's really explored much. It's more about these two guys who are coming in each other's direction. Nick Van Cuso plays this detective, who's in a point in his career where he's very much a loner. He's a great cop, but needs a shot in the arm. So when you first meet me, I'm covering a story about some wonderful thing that he's just done.

"One of the things that's very exciting to me about men is that they love what they do, and they're good at it. That, for me, is always a turn-on. And I saw that in this particular character. She really respects and likes this man, becauss he's so good at what he does. And I tried to just apply that undercurrent, because there is no love story here, but if it's

just one-dimensional, it's pretty uninteresting, I think. Even though I'm playing 'the girl,' I think we found some nice moments there."

Featured in an ensemble cast, Allen plays a pivotal role in QUALITY TIME, a black comedy set in the aftermath of The Great Floods, approx. 2030 AD. "The east coast starts in Pennsylvania and the west coast starts in Arizona, because the ice caps are melting," Allen explains. "It's constantly raining, so people are being forced to move more and more inland, and they're forced to share dwelling spaces because they're running out of places for people to live." Allen portrays Linda Savage, the mother of a homicidal maniac (Corin Nemec). Each evening at six p.m., Savage and her brood must vacate their home while another family, who happens to hate them, moves in for the next 12-hour shift.

"I didn't know ROBOCOP would be a huge hit. I think it was such a change in my sexy image that it really threw people. I got involved with a manager and left CAA."



POLTERGEIST III (1988)—the swan song. Grappling with her "mirror image" (l), Allen crosses into the spirit world (r) & a happy fade-out with Tom Skerritt (b). The movie a U.S. gross $14 million. Part II, released in '86, bagged $41 million.

"Linda is in complete denial of everything, as horrific as her life is," notes Allen. "Her son has become a serial killer, and she thinks he's wonderful. There's a dead body laying in the middle of the living room, and he brings home another girl that he's killed and introduces her as his fiances. Linda just goes on acting as if nothing's wrong."

The film's producer, Jaff Rubens, gauges Allen's performance as "just brilliant. Nancy has to play this mother who does love her son in light of everything that happens. It takes a certain kind of acting and a certain understanding to bring out the depths of the character. Nancy was brilliant at evoking the mother that we'd all love to have, but with a twist. She has this ability to go into a very darker version of a sitcom mom, the kind you see on OZZIE AND HARRIET and FATHER KNOWS BEST."

Allen acknowledges the film "shifts from reality to fantasy and vice versa. In fantasy, it's a perfect world, and there's color and everyone's happy and communicating and then you go back to reality and it's dark. I think it's hysterically funny, but, then again, I have a very sick sense of humor!" Her favorite scene? "There's a musical number that I sing and dance—we all sing and dance—called *Everybody Be Gay*. And my kid starts asking, 'Come on, Mom, sing a song.' And he's got everybody captured at gun point, and I say, 'No, I really don't think this is the right time for a song.' And everyone starts going, *'Come on, Linda, sing!'* We're slip-

Allen in her face-off with Peter Weller's ROBOCOP; the sci-fi film jump-started her career. "I was passionate about doing it. I wanted to work with Paul Verhoeven. I'd seen his SOLDIER OF ORANGE, which was amazing." Verhoeven, who trimmed violence to circumvent an X-rating, has beefed the U.S. version "to watered down."

ping into fantasy and you don't realize it, so all of a sudden, I go, 'Oh, okay!' and I sing a song. And we're in gowns and it's Vegas and all of that. That, for me, was a lot of fun because I really let go with that one."

Just goes to show you that even a person with two left feet can still be dancing on air. And Ms. Allen, who survived a broken marriage and Hollywood deprecation, habitually lands on her feet. Enriching the Fantasy Cinema with characters ranging from high school harlot to crusading constable, her screen persona overshadowed optical effects with the genre currently drowning in pyrotechnics, and loud noises subbing for dialogue, Nancy Allen—stick around, we need you. □

Encoring w/ Weller in ROBOCOP 2 (r), Allen reprised her role opposite Robert Burke as ROBOCOP 3 (b), where her character died and so did the film series.

Jill Kelly TOAD WARRIOR

THE TRIPLE LIFE OF AN INGENUE: A CULT PLAYER IN SCI-FI QUICKIES, ADULT FILM CELEBRITY & CLUB STRIPTEASER.

BY DAN SCAPPEROTTI

TOAD WARRIOR, the second sequel to HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN, was shot sans script. A clan of talking frogs flip for Jill Kelly. *Facing:* Ms. Kelly poses for Lasting Images' renascent technology Wig-L-Vision

Ten years after its debut, HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN has been deservedly eulogized as a "sci-fi sleeper." It was a real hoot about rebellious Sam Hell ("Eat lead, froggies!"), flamboyantly played by wrestler Roddy Piper, who must rescue not only post-apocalyptic earth from infertility but a harem of beautiful breeders from a colony of hybrids (half human/half frog). Directors Donald G. Jackson and R. J. Kizer squeezed eccentric entertainment out of a low budget.

Jackson directed FROGTOWN II, a listless 1990 sequel memorable only for femme fatale Denice Duff (2·4), a cast of veteran actors and homage to a Republic serial, KING OF THE ROCKET MEN.

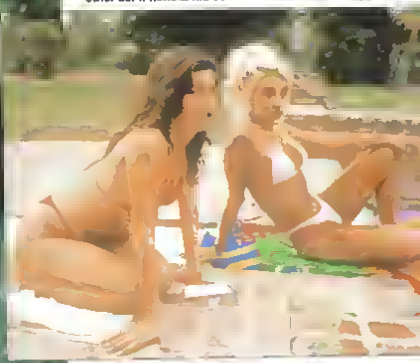
TOAD WARRIOR is supposed to expand the series into a trilogy, but this latest appendage has degenerated into a mime's revue: nothing to show, no dialogue worth recounting. The amphibious mutants have eroded into undergraduate props from a '50s theme park, replete with papier mache pageantry and pancake makeup. Footage of Joe Estevez, which one suspects was swept-up from another movie's cutting room, is strung together with unrelated mise en scenes. My favorite (*not!*) is Conrad Brooks, a leftover from PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE, swepping lines with a sock

puppet. My second favorite (*not!*) is a swaggering "Humphrey Bullfrog," clad in trenchcoat - don't ask. TOAD WARRIOR is either a bad movie or the most surrealistic concept since 2001's "ultimate trip" montage.

Plot (?): The plague that transforms humans into toads may be crippled. A serum that can reverse the process has been created by cyber physician Dr. Trixie Key, but the secret has been stolen. Max Hell, a lone samurai played by kung fu fighter Scott Shaw, is dispatched to recover the elixir.

It's third time at bat for Don Jackson, who describes his milieu as "an abstract reality of a world-gone-toad." The film's only irony is that Jill Kelly, an adult star, doesn't drop a stitch of clothing. "I've always liked the old TV shows like THE AVENGERS," said Jackson. "So we wanted to do a strong female character, and here's a tall strong blonde who's skilled in martial arts and weaponry. It's a chance for Jill, who's cast as a secret agent, to show the things she can do."

Kelly, who was raised in Pomona, became acquainted with B-films when a friend introduced her to Jackson. The director was casting THE



L: Kelly notes TOAD WARRIOR "is Zen-style of filmmaking: no script is required." Credited as Adrienne Moore, she appeared in Don Jackson's other sci-fi films & his comedic IT'S SHOWTIME (b).

ROLLERBLADE SEVEN and hired Kelly, who tallied experience in club cabarets, as a dancer. Jackson was impressed enough with the starlet to buttress her screen visibility in the likes of RETURN OF THE ROLLERBLADE SEVEN, CARJACK, IT'S SHOWTIME, BIG SISTER 2000 and QUEEN OF LOST ISLAND, the latter a Julie Strain vehicle. "Jill's very good," said Jackson. "She gets better all the time."

Kelly candidly admitted, "After doing a few films for Don Jackson, I went

into the adult business. The same actress [Tiffany Williams] who had introduced me to Don went into the adult films—and, about a year later, I went into it. I was pretty insecure my first day on the set. Just doing 'the deed' in front of people was intimidating enough, but there were a lot of other pretty girls there so I was pretty intimidated."

She needn't have worried. The Spice Network, one of cable-TV's most popular adult channels, featured seven of Kelly's films in a single week. Guess that's ample reward.

"The hardest scenes I've had to shoot were in WICKED WEAPON," said Kelly. "We were outside, totally naked in 35 degree weather. The wind was blowing really fast. We had to do a scene with two other people, all of us freezing our butts off. It was kind of a futuristic film like BABEWARRIOR. Jenna Jameson, who is one of my best friends, was the star. She has just done the Howard Stern movie. She was the blonde, the first person to be naked, and I played her best friend, a police officer. She's like a superhero in this movie. She comes to save me—I was kidnapped and taken to an old refinery—but by the time she saves me, I've had sex with the bad guys out in the cold."

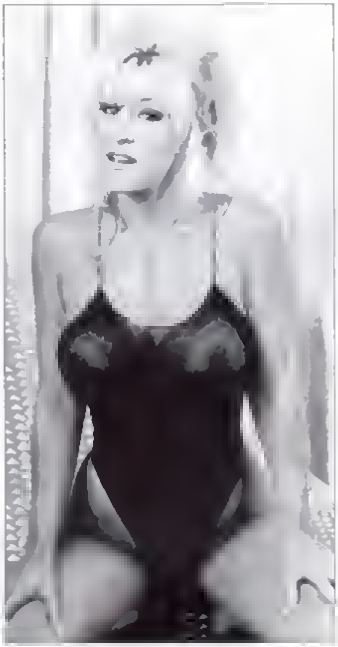
In contrast, Kelly developed a tolerance for heat—I'm talking torrid California desert. "And those locations were for the same film! The wind was blowing the sand all around. We use lube to help in the sex scenes and the sand would stick to the lube, and then we'd have to do the sex scenes. Not fun."

Looking back over the 200 films she rapidly accumulated—sample TAINTED LOVE, BORDERLINE JOCK, PERVERTED WOMAN and MASQUE—Kelly professes her "fave" is DOUBLE CROSS. "Some of the adult films—not all, but some!—are better than the B-movies. They should cut out the sex scenes because some of the stories are better. DOUBLE CROSS was an action love story. I've done a lot better movies, but it was fun 'action' do to."

Most of the adult films are shot in only one day. "But they can be long days," reaffirmed Kelly. "We shot one, for example, at a ranch in Malibu. My call time was 8 a.m. and we got finished at 3:30 in the morning. It takes about 45 minutes to film one sex scene. You usually never do more than two sex scenes a day. I used to do a lot of films, but now I only work once or twice a month because I mainly dance, I'm on the road most of the time."

JILL KELLY

"B-films give me more satisfaction but the least money. But some X-films have better stories: they could discard the sex!"



"It was intense my first day on an X-film set. Just doing the deed in front of people was intimidating, but lots of other pretty girls were there, so I was pretty intimidated."

Touring the strip club circuit can turn a hefty profit. *U.S. News and World Report* recently reported that performing burlesque routines in grindhouses have earned the top six adult stars between $15,000 to $20,000 a week. "I fly to Florida on Monday," said Kelly, "and I do one show at the Crazy Horse II. Then I'm there for a week doing shows at 8:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. and midnight. It depends on the club how many shows you do. Over the week, I'm doing 16 shows. I'm going to Canada at the end of the month and that's 24 shows. It's great money, but very difficult. It's hard because of the time differences and you're not home sleeping in your own bed. You have to be 'on' when you're on stage. But I have fun doing it too. I like meeting people.

"Each club is different. It can be bikini, topless or nude. Usually, if the dancers are nude, the club doesn't serve alcohol. But in Florida or Canada they can. Those are the most risque places."

Cast in TOAD WARRIOR as "Agent Glory," Kelly describes her role as "a good guy trying to save the world from the toads. I'm one of the stars. We shot it in the desert at the dry lake bed in El Mirage and somewhere off the 118."

The film opens with a a pair of ultralight planes, and a truck navigated by four toads clad in ninja togs, in pursuit of Kelly across the blistering desert terrain. "I was lucky because *I* wasn't wearing a toad mask," Kelly smiled. "It was super hot those days and I hadn't gotten much sleep the night before, and we started real early. The B-movies give me the most satisfaction but the least money. It's fun to become a character in a short amount of time and, with the B-movies, I always take my acting seriously."

Jackson recounted the introductory scene as "a difficult one. Jill did a lot of running and fighting. We had four full-size frog heads. Those are the fully mutated frogs: then we had a group of ninja frogs that had just the face masks." The director interprets his technique as "Zen filmmaking or spontaneous creation." *Translation: no script.* "Pornos *always* have scripts," said Kelly. "Zen films don't have scripts. It just comes out of the director and the actors. Either you develop your character, or the director helps you develop her. It was pretty easy for me to become Agent Gloria because I understood what Don wanted."

But c'mon, no script? Jackson shrugged it off. "That's pretty normal for the kind of movies I make. It's one of those things where actors adapt to it and they have fun with it—or they're totally afraid of it. Most actors are schooled in traditional ways of doing things, which is you recite from a screenplay. That really turns me off on low-budget things because it sounds like they've *memorized* their lines—it's not spontaneous. It just doesn't have the kind of energy that I like to see making these movies. You don't know what you're going to do until the actors

continued on page 60

TURTLE FEMME

continued from page 4

named her Venus."

So will the addition of a bombshell heat-up a hormonal competition? "You mean will there be a *romantic* tension between any of them?" winks Eastman. "Yes. Will there be Turtle babies? Who knows? They all kind of like her—and want to be picked as her favorite. She's playing it cool and keeping it so she likes them all at the moment. We'll see what the writers and I come up with in later episodes."

Step #3: *Consult the Chiodo brothers for the construction of a 3-dimensional De Milo.* "We want through *a lot* of sketches, *a lot* of variations to get that blend of femininity and muscularity," notes f/x maestro Ed Chiodo. "We went through the *'total babe'*—long legs and knockout look—to *'bimbo'* to *'drop-dead gorgeous'* to a *'feminine but attractive'* Turtle, and that's where we landed."

Y. Nicole Parker insists she is her Venus alter ego "are close." B. Kevin Eastman, TURTLES co-creator

"It was largely based on who was going to be in the suit, in terms of getting somebody small enough to maintain the feminine proportions. Longer legs and things like that."

Eastman acknowledges De Milo's physique was cautiously evaluated. "We could not make her too sexy. We could not give her large breasts or anything...well, maybe she has little ones. There's always a potential for them to grow and change as the series goes on.

"But we thought, 'Perhaps she was a *little sister*-type of scenario.' That was the best way to go—make her a little shorter than the rest of the gang, sort of like Mary Lou Retton." Chiodo explains that he and his small army of makeup specialists "did full-sized [photographic] blowups around the actor that's going to be in the suit. From there, you just go to a full-sized clay sculpture and you start to see what the character is going to look like. Her character took some finesse to get done properly. [Sculptors] John Brown and K.C. Marks did a great job."

Youthful actress Nicole Parker was cast as the embodiment of De Milo. Parker, who often appears in Vancouver-based projects, is no stranger to the fantasy genre. Her credits include NEVERENDING STORY III and a myriad of TV shows: SLIDERS ("Gillian of the Spirits"), THE X-FILES ("War of the Coprophages" & "Quagmire"), and MILLENNIUM.

Clad in full costume—sans the mechanical head—the red-haired, ponytailed Parker relates, "I think I got the role because my audition was scheduled *after* my return from Hong Kong. I spent a lots of time learning about Tai Chi. When I came back in time for the audition, I guess it really showed." She reaches into the suit and pulls out a small necklace with a round, crystal medallion etching of the Ying/Yang design. "This symbol I'm wearing, I got in Hong Kong as a gift. It's the same symbol I'm wearing on the costume! A very old Chinese man gave this to me and said, 'This is for you.' And I came back and I got Venus De Milo! It's bizarre! Everything happened so fast! They wanted an acting audition first, I did scenes and they tested our body movements. They liked the way I moved!"

Venus De Milo, notes Parker, is significantly different from the male Turtles. "She's very calm and centered. She uses her brain. We're all very individual and if we start melding too much alike, then it takes the interest away. What's interesting about five people who are identical? The Turtles are just close. We're all very individual and we respect that about each other. Everyone's got such personality quirks. And we laugh at each other. We're all getting very close. It's kind of funny—on the show we're a family and, off-camera, we're family."

And how closely does the actress's personality approximate De Milo's demeanor? Parker giggles and replies, "*Very close*, actually! De Milo holds back a little more than I do. I'm a little more hyper than she is. But I use that energy differently." □

FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 6

ets), Forrest J Ackerman, Carolyn Renee Smith. Check-out past shows by pressing the "archives" icon. The Fall '97 line-up includes **Brinke Stevens**, *Vampirella* artist **Mark Texeira**, actor **Jon Cryer** (HOT SHOTS), actress/*FF* staffer **Jennifer Huss**. And don't miss the all-Anime show with guest **Apollo Smile**.

• Cindy Johns, who rendered her alter ego into *The Blonde Avenger*, resigned from self-publishing to boost her comic book into the mainstream. Seems she had a sweet deal with Brainstorm Comics until the company unceremoniously dropped the writer/artist. Did Brainstorm gauge Johns' "bad girl" image too provocative? According to Her Blondeness, "The falling out stems from a contract dispute. It's necessary to stand up for my beliefs. I look forward to the day when I can get back to what I really enjoy, and that's self-published comics. Never say *die*!"

• NIGHTMAREZ CAFÉ, a "late night horror talk show" hosted by *Vampi, the Vegetarian Vampire*, debuted on Buenavision Cable (East Los Angeles, channel 6) plans for expansion are in the works. Video taped in front of a live audience, the show features interviews with guests from the independent film industry, remote shoots and "happening haunts." Vampi is the alter ego of Gigi Porter, who co-produces the show with actor Reggie Bannister (PHANTASM). See the Café's web site: **http://www.nightmarez.com/vampi.htm** □

MORTAL KOMBAT

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from purgatory. During filming, Marjean Holden was "fitted with pinball bumper-like prosthetics" under her real arms that were tracked by the f/x technicians so they could approximate where the artificial limbs should later be added. "We'll fill in the extra arms by using a 2-D comp for the wide shots," says Kutchaver. "We are also going to digitize them. They gave us some mechanical arms but I don't know where they used them in the film."

The film's teaser trailer is highlighted with a fight between Sonya and a liquefied assailant named Noob-Saibot,

who excretes an oily ooze from his chest that slides along the ground and generates into a clone of himself "It's a 3-D element that we animated, than morphed out of one body and then morphed into another body," notes O'Neill "He was photographed in a two-way split he on one side with Sonya, then he walked around the other side and they got the second or B-side plate of him fighting with her It's short, quick cuts but it looks neat"

Special effects gave Sindel's coiffure a cutting edge "She extrudes these tiny, razorsharp blades out of her hair and uses them as weapons," explains Beswick "We made these braids in 3-D and I matched and animated them to her physical action on the set Kevin is about to roto and composite the braids into her head When the bladed braids hit the stunt actor, we'll have flesh exploding out of his arm and shoulder All the bits of flesh will be animated stuff fueled from a program called *Particle Storm*, where we create realistic pictures of throwing things around in a 3-D environment"

Leonetti insists, "The paradox of the martial arts is that you train to be the best, but you never want to fight *Mortal Kombat* is not about death but preserving life It's not about fighting, it's fortifying the person inside you" □

TOAD WARRIOR

continued from page 50

are in costume and the camera is set up and I'll figure out what the dialogue and action is going to be and we'll rehearse it and do it. I'm usually telling the actors what to say I have a general direction that we're going to go

"Jill Kelly's attitude is terrific Very dependable I'd say Jill and Julia Strain are the most professional, dependable actress with whom I've worked Jill's never let me down We took her over to the American Film Market she stopped the show, she stopped traffic Jill has some type of magnetism that people like She stands out in a crowd"

Jeff Marks, president of Lasting Images, developed "a series of 10 sensuous trading cards" each featuring Ms Kelly the most provocative card was shot in "Wig-L-Vision" Tilt the card and Kelly wiggles into motion. Deja vu. □

LETTERS

HAMMER HEROINES

My husband and I are regular subscribers to your magazine We really enjoyed the article on Hammer Heroines (6 1) by Jessie Lilley and Ronald Dale Garmon The article was entertaining and informative, and we'd very much like to see similar film criticisms in the future

Also, we've both turned into tremendous fans of the SHE-WOLF OF LONDON television series (1990), which has resurfaced on the Sci-Fi Channel Perhaps an article on Kate Hodge, who played the title role, would be possible?

Nancy Wright
Richmond, VA

Regarding the Hammer Heroines article Hazel Court, Barbara Shelley and Veronica Carlson had closing remarks where they indicated Hammer Films treated women with more respect and dignity than did other production companies It's true it wasn't like that in other areas I catch reruns of DR WHO, and can't help but observe that the doc's female companions are often screaming victims They're always referred to as "the girl " Think of it the antagonist, a sentient not even remotely human, somehow refers to Who's sidekick not as "the human female" but "the girl "

Earlier in the Hammer article, Jessie Lilley and Ronald D Garmon comment on Sue Sveble's descriptions of Hammer women as " unsupported assertions, misplaced anger and a rhetorical style of Rush Limbaugh at his worst " Considering Lilley and Garmon's otherwise astute scholarship, this kind of statement is a letdown Not all your readers take for granted that Limbaugh is something's he's not More accurate to use Dick Gephardt or Ted Kennedy *(or Al Gore)* as the model, here, I've heard *their* unsupported assertions from their own mouths I've been a liberal most of my life, but recognize and respect that Limbaugh is right on the money on nearly everything he says, with accurate documentation to back him up If liberals are sloppy and careless in their assertions, it will only make Limbaugh more effective He's also more polite with people than he's given credit for—my own observation

Wilfred D DeVoe
Anaheim, CA

GOLDBRICKING?

Shirley Eaton's interview (5 10) was quite good, but there was an omission from her film credits Back in 1962, she guest-starred in the very first episode of Roger Moore's TV series, THE SAINT titled "The Talented Husband," Eaton was cast as an insurance investigator working with Simon Templar I just thought it would make an interesting bit of trivia for your next "007/Fatale Femmes" issue

Mike Proctor
Houston, TX

READERS RECOMMEND FEMMES FOR PROFILES

The very first *FF* issue opened with a Jamie Lee Curtis interview How about celebrating your 7th anniversary by bringing Jamie back? She's 200% femme fatale

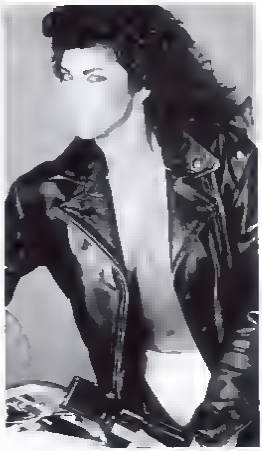
Rachel Banks
Richmond Heights, Ohio

Congratulations on the Hammer Heroines issue Could you similarly devote an issue to the beautiful, talented actresses who were cast in Gerry & Sylvia Anderson's live action sci-fi series (UFO, SPACE 1999, THE PROTECTORS)? The Anderson repertory included Gabrielle Drake, Wanda Ventham, Catherine Schell, Zienia Merton & Nyree Dawn Porter

Craig Collins
Nova Scotia, Canada

How about an article on the actresses who played CHOPPER CHICKS IN ZOMBIETOWN? Think about an interview with "chopper chick" Jamie Rose, who played the title role as LADY BLUE during the '85 season on ABC? And who could forget Catherine Carlen as the booze-swigging, cigaz-chomping Rox? Or Nina Peterson as the silent but dangerous Tanya? And, of course, Lycia Naff who also had a memorable bit in TOTAL RECALL as the hooker with 3 breasts Come to think of it, the only one to survive this movie—and move on to bigger things—is Billy Bob Thornton And he's not even a chick.

Michael Anziani
Hicksville, NY



A showgirl in Bette Midler & Madonna films, a celeb in B's. readers crave Karen Russell.

How about Bridget Jones? She plays a whole spectrum of characters on MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000

Sharon Bergin
Grand Marais, Minnesota

Karen Russell, the underrated beauty who was in MURDER WEAPON, DOCTOR ALIEN (w/ Michelle Bauer), SHOCK 'EM DEAD (w/ Traci Lords)— Profile, please?

Ron Jares
Scottsdale, AZ

[Russell is not only a viable name on the video/cable markets (EASY WHEELS, MOB BOSS), but hoofs in big budget fare tailored for the likes of Madonna (DICK TRACY) and Bette Midler (IN CONCERT DIVA LAS VEGAS) We'll keep you posted on her projects]

It's about time to do a Linda Fiorentino interview

Alain Thoret
Paris France

Dawn Ann Billings, a former Ford model turned actress, deserves a crack at a profile Cast opposite Don "The Dragon" Wilson, she threw a mean kick in VIRTUAL COMBAT and kicked some butt in TRANCERS 3 And the scene where she gives birth to WARLOCK THE ARMAGEDDON is one of the most disturbing in recent memory

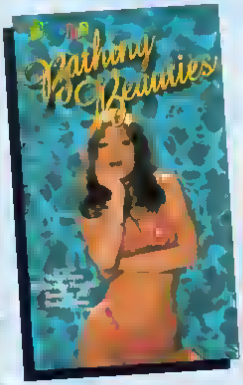
Walter Olson
Bellevue, WA

I thought the "STAR TREK 50 Sexiest" tally (6 2) was a brilliant idea, but thanks mainly for including a decent-sized photo of Nancy Kovak She got my attention on a STAR TREK rerun that was televised on English television. I have seen also her on reruns of the BATMAN series and various movies (JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, FRANKIE & JOHNNY) It would be wonderful if you could do a whole profile on Ms Kovak (when did she retire?)

Also, I remember catching reruns of a series called LAND OF THE GIANTS, which included two attractive cast members Could you identify them for me? Are they still active?

Tony Reeve
Norfolk, England

[Ms Kovak's career will be covered in our subsequent STAR TREK issue Heather Young and Deanna Lund were LAND OF THE GIANTS' fetching femmes Ms Young, the mother of five offspring who relocated to Utah, writes children's stories Lund was active until the early '90s. her gorgeous daughter, Michele Matheson—who's earned some genre visibility via HOWLING VI and TEST TUBE TEENS FROM THE YEAR 2000—was featured in last year's KINGPIN]



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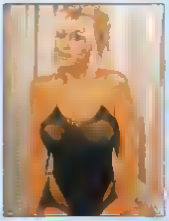

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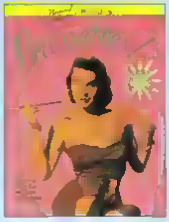

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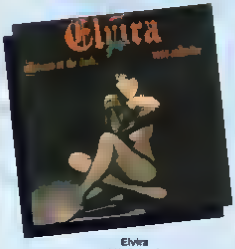

Elvira
1998 Calendar
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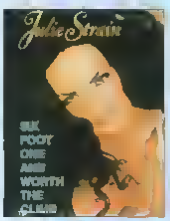

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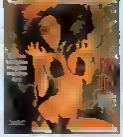

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